HOW TO COOK HUSBANDS—YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS. *See page 30.*

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 575. FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 6TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

TAKE CARE

when drinking Cocoa to have the pure article only, as many so-called "Pure" Cocoas contain added matter that is not only unnecessary, but often positively harmful.

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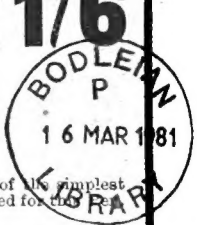

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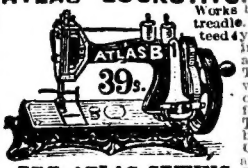

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SHORT STORIES

No. 575.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week Ending January 6th, 1900.

A PREMATURE RELEASE.

AN INCIDENT IN THE HISTORY OF "L'AFFAIRE DREYFUS."

It began with one of those frequent occasions on which Skipper Saxey—a plucky little American sailor—found himself stranded in London. His tastes were too literary, and his temperament too Quixotic, for the making of a successful ship-master. He knew this, but stern necessity kept him to the calling, and providing that he came out safe in the end, he rather enjoyed the escapades into which he was so often lured. They gave an extra flavour of romance to the mystic spell of the sea; and this alone, apart from need, made him tackle a good many commissions no other sane man would have looked at.

He was striding briskly along the East India Docks one misty night, his hands in his coat pockets and the eternal cigarette between his lips, mentally figuring out how many days his £5 odd would last, when a quick, nervous step behind attracted his attention, and he pulled up.

Someone was endeavouring to overtake him, and hearing him stop, called to him by name. Saxey faced round, on his guard.

"Have no fear, M'sieur Saxey," said the unknown. "It is a friend, who wishes only to speak with you."

Saxey recognised in the figure that emerged from the fog a man whom he had seen several times lately in

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one or two of the usual haunts of seamen, and asked briefly what his business was.

"If M'sieur will be so good," said the other, "he will come with me to a quiet place where we can talk alone. Or, if he would prefer, we can go to his hotel."

The tall skipper looked the sallow, adipose little Frenchman up and down twice.

"I'm not afraid of *you*," he said, "but I take no risks in this rabbit-warren. If you've something particular to say, come on to my hotel, as you term it. I should say it's a sort of cross between a woodshed and a hayloft. This way."

A street further on the pair entered a rickety-looking public house, went up a creaking stairway and entered a stuffy little attic. Saxey locked the door, turned up the wick of an odorous paraffin lamp, nodded his visitor to the solitary chair, and waited, his whole attitude an unvoiced question.

"It is a leetle delicate, this which I must ask you, captain," his visitor began. "But I think you are not so very—er—rich?"

"Never mind my bank account," said Saxey, with a grim smile. "Let's be hearing your delicate business, and if there's any dollars in it I'm ready, short of actual murder or treason."

"I am afraid it is something like that—'treason' you call it," the other said. "You have heard of l'affaire Dreyfus?"

"Yes, by thunder," said Saxey, "I have, and what I've heard has been enough to make every man who is not a Frenchman thankful for the fact. Well?"

"Then, like so many of your noble countrymen, you have sympathy with the prisoner?"

Saxey acquiesced emphatically.

"Then my task will not be so difficult. I have heard of you at several ports, and when this—commission—was put into my hands, I thought of you at once. You are the man we want. You have at present no ship, and you are not hard to please. We have a ship waiting to take you out if you will dare the risk."

"I tumble," said Saxey. "Some of you revisionist chaps want to liberate Captain Dreyfus without waiting for the verdict of the law. It's a dangerous job, and so you want some dare-devil to pull your chestnut out of the fire."

"I don't know what you mean by tumble, and chestnut," said the Frenchman, "but you understand me, it is evident."

"Have no fear, M'sieur Saxey," said the unknown. "It is a friend, who only wishes to speak with you."

"Yes, that's so," said Saxey. "If there's dollars in the biz, I'm your man. But I must be sure of those dollars. Fixed as I am, I'll have to put my price high. The French Government's a big enemy for one man to dodge successfully. What are you going to do with Dreyfus if I get him?"

"If we can only produce him unexpectedly in Paris at a great revisionist meeting, side by side with his wife, we shall win the day," said the Frenchman. "My countrymen are very—what you call—volatile. The event would carry Paris by storm, and the scoundrels who are sheltering behind the 'honour of the army,' would instantly take flight. If you are successful, M'sieur Captain, have no fear of my Government. You will be the idol of the French people. As to reward, do not trouble yourself. Here are some bank-notes for immediate expenses; twice the amount will be handed to you when you sign your articles for the ship; and ten times as much as that when Captain Dreyfus steps on French soil."

Saxey's eyes opened wide at the roll of notes, value £400. Putting them quietly in the breast pocket of his coat, he said:

"We are agreed, sir. Shall I write you a receipt?"

"No, no," said the other. "Paper is incriminating. We trust in M'sieur's honour. Those behind me have unlimited funds."

"Indeed," said Saxey. "And now for particulars. Granted that I get within sight of the Captain's prison, how do I proceed? Have you made preparations there?"

"M'sieur is—sharp!" said the Frenchman. "Yes. Francs have value, even in the Ile du Diable. We have friends in the garrison of that hell. We have also a friend who will go with you who is the perfect image of Captain Dreyfus. It has taken us months to find this man, and weeks to persuade him, even with gold, to play the part we wish. He will go with you, and on the night when chance favours our friends and the Captain escapes to the place where you are waiting, he and the prisoner will change clothes. You will then put off, leaving him to be discovered by the soldiers, who will search for the escaped prisoner. It will be a strange experience for the double, but, of course, when our triumph comes, he will be released and recompensed. Does the scheme seem so wild now, M'sieur?"

"I must own it's well planned," Saxey said. "The

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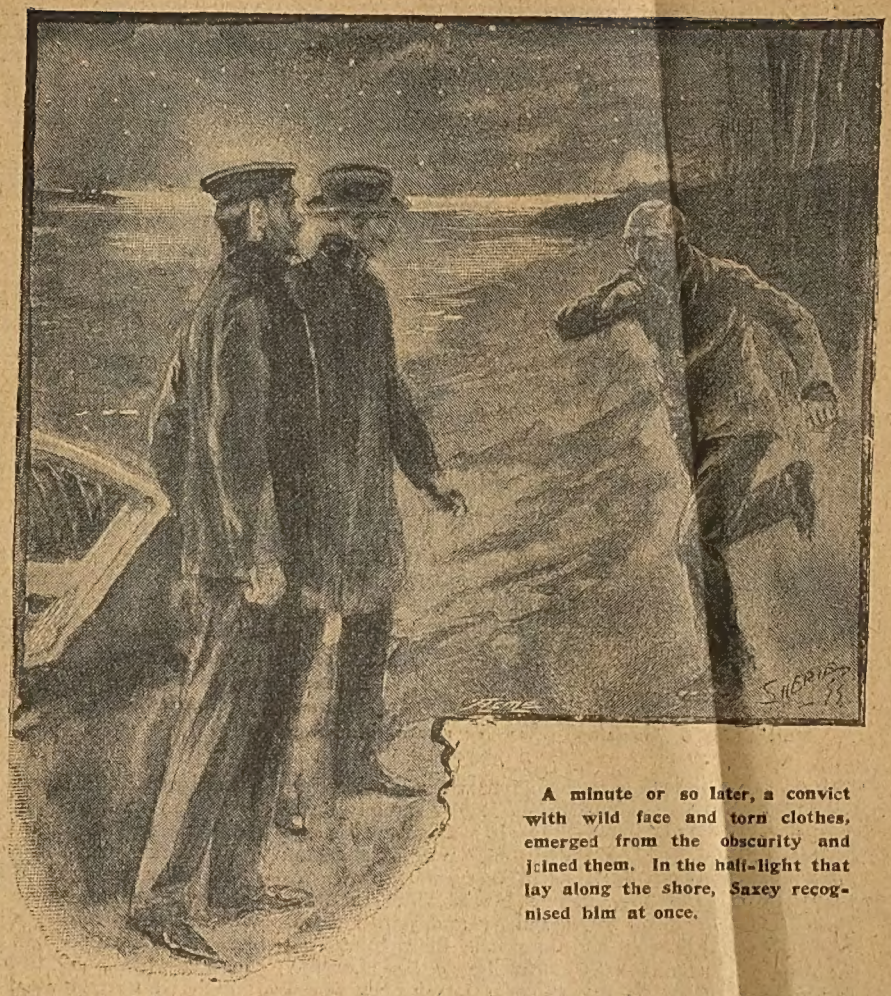
sooner we get to work the better. I'll be ready to start the day after to-morrow."

"Good," said the Frenchman, his eyes twinkling with hysteric joy. "To-night a better day dawns for my misguided country!"

With which patriotic if somewhat mixed declaration the Frenchman departed, promising to call for the skipper at the right time.

Three days later, the *Juno*, a small but well-equipped steam yacht, weighed anchor and stood down the Thames. Her owner, ostensibly, was M. Jules Lervane, a retired gentleman who intended travelling in the South Pacific. Skipper Saxey, her acting master, stood on the bridge in spick and span new nautical attire as she went out. He had the air of a man on whom all the world smiles.

M. Jules Lervane was an eccentric character. The *Juno* made a long and circuitous voyage before she entered the southern seas. Her crew was small, she carried no passengers, and Saxey was allowed to rule all and sundry with a rod of iron. The owner was seldom seen on deck except in the evenings, and was never known to land at any port, and though he and his English skipper held many private consultations over the business in prospect, it was never alluded to in the presence of any of the crew. Saxey often wondered whether they were in the know or not, and the ship's doctor—an Englishman named Watson—often aroused his curiosity for the same reason, but on this point he remained unsatisfied.



A minute or so later, a convict with wild face and torn clothes, emerged from the obscurity and joined them. In the half-light that lay along the shore, Saxey recognised him at once.

The ship routine went on with unusual smoothness, and long before the dreaded penal settlement was approached Saxey had read through all the scientific works he had brought to beguile the voyage.

At last, just as he was finishing the study of Weismann's "Germ-Plasm" for the second time, the low shores of the island were sighted. It needed all Saxey's sea-skill and native cuteness to keep out of danger for the next two days. Prying French gunboats and cruisers had to be dodged or duped, and a week went by before the *Juno* ventured to cast anchor on a sand spit that was hidden from view of the interior by a somewhat high bluff and a thick wood.

This part of the island was desolate and dismal beyond all description, and here it was that M. Jules Lervane was to step into the place of the convict, Dreyfus. The arrival of the yacht had of course been timed by previous agreement, and that night, or any one of the following six dark evenings, the attempt was to be made.

Four nights passed without a sign. The *Juno* lifted gently on the ground swell, to all appearance a deserted ship stranded on an uninhabited island. There was nothing to look at but the restless motion of the sea, the glaring sun in the clear sky by day or the silent stars by night; nothing to hear but the lap of the waves, the cries of the few sea-birds, the murmur of the breeze in the dark wood, and occasionally a faint distant cry from inland, as of some being in mortal pain.

A wailing note of more than usual intensity was heard as Saxey and Lervane beached their boat on the sand the fifth night. It was followed by the booming echo of a distant gun. They shivered when they heard it, although the atmosphere was oppressive as that of a dark oven. Saxey threw himself on the sand and ground his teeth, but neither of the men spoke.

With every nerve and sense alert they waited for the signal that should tell them that Dreyfus had escaped through the outer line of sentries. The time dragged on slowly, and Saxey, unable to read, unable to smoke, chafed under the suspense. He anathematized the dull swish of the ebb tide on the sand, the sighing of the night breeze in the dark wood, the heat, and his own foolishness; he scowled at the glorious dome of stars that twinkled down at him in magnificent indifference.

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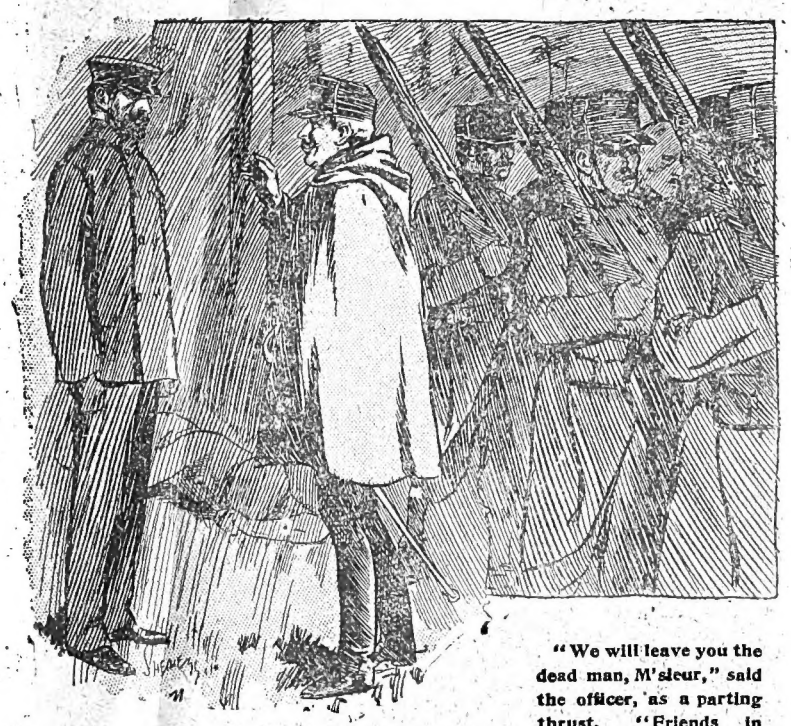

"We will leave you the dead man, M'sieur," said the officer, as a parting thrust. "Friends in Europe may be inquisitive when you return. Au revoir!"

But presently a long, low whistle, with a double rise and fall in its tone, reached them. Both sprang at once to their feet. They answered it. It was succeeded by another and much nearer sound—the sound of someone coming rapidly through the crackling undergrowth. A minute or so later, a convict with wild face, and torn clothes, emerged from the obscurity and joined them.

In the half-light that lay along the shore Saxey recognised him at once. So marvellously like Lervane was he that but for the dress of each the skipper would not have known even then which was the convict, and which the intended substitute. There was no time for ceremony or delay, so he stepped back at once for the boat.

"Be quick with your change of togs," said he to Lervane as the Frenchmen exchanged greetings. "There's no telling how soon we shall have this hornet's nest about our ears."

"We will be swift, m'sieur, fear not," said the convict, ridding himself of the hated prison garb with feverish celerity. "The alarm has already been given. You will have heard the gun. I had then been free an hour, but had not dared to make the signal because I feared that I was being tracked. Here, my friend."

It was at this moment that Fate intervened. Lervane had undressed as quickly as the prisoner, and the two men, clothed as Nature made them, were putting out eager hands to seize each other's attire, when there came a hurried trampling and crackling in the undergrowth around. A dozen excited shouts, a scuffle, and a squad of soldiers were upon them. The two unfortunates made a sprint for the boat, which Saxey already had on the move, but the soldiers were too near. Even before the lanky skipper had time to use his revolver the trio were in the hands of the enemy.

The officer of the squad, a stout, red-moustached man, whose natural joviality had been soured into a very grim kind of humour by the gruesome character of the place, looked his three prisoners up and down carefully. He was apparently nonplussed at the two Messieurs Dreyfus, and still more at the presence of the American, but gradually began to see light. The boat, and the dim outlines of the ship on the sand-spit, seemed good circumstantial evidence. Though he with difficulty suppressed a yawn—the men had been roused from sleep for the pursuit—he smiled meaningly as he said:

"It is strange, gentlemen. I come to seek one prisoner and I capture three fugitives. I look for one Captain Dreyfus and I find two, with a mutual friend. There is more than a mere attempted escape here. There is a conspiracy, there is treachery. Captain Dreyfus has friends in France, and those friends have money. They have also genius. But they evidently do not know how watchful are the guardians of the prison. Confess, gentlemen, that I am right?"

The unclothed unfortunates could only confess.

"And you?" speaking to Saxey. "I can talk English, you hear!"

"I guess you're pretty central," said Saxey sullenly. "Only a fool could help it, who uses his eyes. Yes, we've come over for your blessed convict, and you've euchred us instead. What are you going to do next? If you'll take your man back, you're welcome to him; we shall only be too glad to say good-bye. I wouldn't keep you out of bed a moment, I am sure, on my account. I know when I get to a dead end as well as anybody, and I give you my word that this will be the last time I'll set foot on this cursed spot."

"I shall take back my man, certainly," said the officer, "but which of these two naked ones is he? Perhaps you can tell me that, m'sieur? Whichever I take, I shall certainly have the other shot. Can you tell me, now, which is the real Captain Dreyfus?"

Saxey was in a quandary. Had he known which was which, he would scarcely have liked to say, and he was not sure of their identity himself now. While he hesitated the two Dromios spoke.

"I am the real Captain Dreyfus!" said the convict. "I am ready to return to my cell."

"I am the real Captain Dreyfus," said M. Lervane, the fear of death strong upon him.

"Ah! You both prefer the Ile du Diable to the Great Hereafter!" smiled the officer. "But you make things confused with such a queer agreement. I cannot wait here all night. I have an idea, m'sieur" (this to Saxey), "I cannot tell which is the man I want, nor do I care, so long as one returns with me and one is shot. With you, it is different. I do not wish to be harsh with you, if you are here simply as the tool of others. You might be missed, also, and foreign inquiries and complications are detestable. I am satisfied that if you go back alive we shall not again be troubled with you. But before I

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let you go you must tell me which is the true Dreyfus and which is the double.

"I'm not sure that I would if I could," said Saxey, "and I'm quite sure that I can't even if I would."

"Then, m'sieur, we must see how chance decides. So long as we get the affair ended quickly I do not mind at all which we choose. We shall be sure to secure one traitor and execute another. I love a jest so we will throw the dice for them. We were playing at sunset and I have the ivories here. You shall throw, m'sieur, unless the gentleman will save you the trouble by declaring themselves."

The two men, white-faced but resolute, reiterated their former statements. Each one claimed vehemently, to be the real and only Dreyfus. The soldiers, between their yawns, laughed immoderately. The officer shrugged his shoulders.

"You see, m'sieur," he said to Saxey, in mock deference, "I am compelled to appeal to chance. I need not say that if you refuse I shall reconsider my decision regarding you. Are you ready?"

The tall man, liberated from his captors, took the dice box with an unsteady hand, muttered under his breath, and waited for the signal. The two men were placed against separate trees some distance apart and a file of soldiers with rifles at the ready, facing each of them. The officer stood between his two files and turned to Saxey.

"Now, m'sieur, throw! High for death, low for the prison. First cast for the right hand man."

The American, after a rapid consideration of his position, complied. Unmarried, he might have faced the matter out in defiance, but the thought of his patient little wife in Philadelphia raised a lump in his throat. He rattled the dice and rolled them out on the palm of his left hand.

"Six—four—ten," said the officer. "Now for the other."

The dice rattled and rolled again.

"Five—five—ten! *Sacré!* Again, m'sieur."

Twice more Saxey threw the fatal dice, great beads of perspiration breaking out on his forehead.

"Five—four—nine. Two—six—eight. Right hand file, fire!" shouted the officer.

There was a sharp, unhesitating volley, a swiftly-ended cry of fear, and someone died. The other put on the convict's dress in haste, not waiting to be told. The soldiers closed round him and marched away.

"We will leave you the dead man, M'sieur," said the officer, as a parting thrust! "Friends in Europe may be inquisitive when you return. Au revoir!"

Saxey's answer to this was of too forcible a nature to be embodied in printer's ink. He picked up the body, put Lervane's clothes upon it, dragged it to the boat, and rowed back to the ship. The crew were, of course, anxious to know what the firing was about, but Saxey's strict orders that no man was to leave the vessel had been obeyed. He carried the body down to the cabin himself, curtly informing his questioners that there had been a misunderstanding with the French garrison, and their owner was badly hit. Once in the cabin, and the doctor with him, he locked the door.

"Why, the man's dead!" said the doctor, after a brief examination.

"Hush, I know that," said the tall man, stroking his chin viciously. "There's a good reason for it. But we've got to bluff these compatriots of his if we want to get away from here alive, Watson. This is not exactly a salubrious neighbourhood for our health, I can assure you. You'll read between the lines, p'raps, and if you can't I might tell you some day. And the sooner we're off this ship the better. As long as they think the boss is alive they'll obey my orders like so many sheep, and we've got a chance to scoot. You'll report him dangerously ill, for the present—see?"

"I see," said Watson, and went out.

Directly he was gone Saxey turned the body over and looked at the tip of the left ear. There was a small dark mole on it, so small as to be but dimly visible in the electric light. He had noticed that once before, when its owner had ventured on deck.

"Why, man, he's dead!" said the doctor, after a brief examination.

The body was that of M. Jules Lervane. The Ile du Diable still held its famous prisoner.

GEORGE C. WALLIS.

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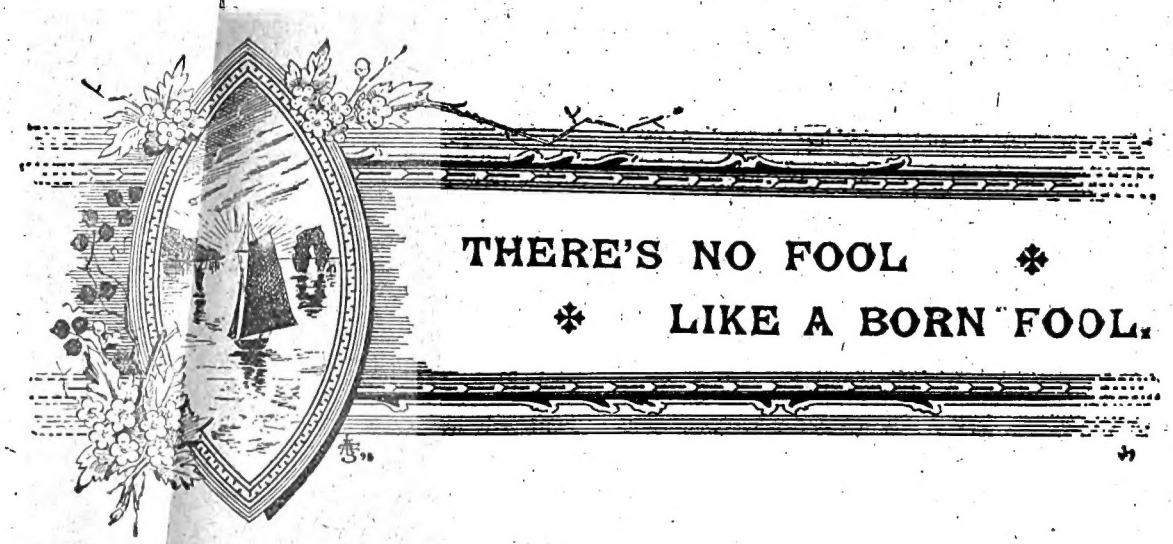

THERE'S NO FOOL ✣ ✣ LIKE A BORN FOOL.

WHO has not, in a measure, committed suicide? Does not everyone kill himself, more or less. Some by too much dissipation; others by working to excess; others by making night day; others by loving those who do not love them. Means of suicide abound; one has only to choose.

I, too, have committed suicide, just like many another, not precisely to the same extent as those whose tragic end is reported in the daily newspapers, but I did what I could.

I had been sent to Paris to study art, by my parents, who were anxious that I should enjoy the advantage of the best French masters at an early stage in my career; and I had been a student in the artists' quarter for nearly two years, having become almost a Frenchman, when I first met Gabrielle, under the chestnut trees of the Luxembourg. When I saw her it was as if a thunderbolt struck me. I laid my heart, my twenty years, my scanty purse, at Gabrielle's feet.

Gabrielle made a face.

I did not notice it, because I loved her.

She condescended, however, to accept breakfast under the arbour at Viroflay, invitations to the theatre, and many articles for her wardrobe.

She gave me to understand that I would be the last of men to be loved if I did not present her with a scarf, earrings, a parasol—two, three parasols. I saw my last sou vanish.

I sold everything that I could realise, including my one and only arm-chair. I was obliged to confide the care of my watch to one of those hospitable houses which we English call "my uncle," the French term "my aunt," and which we art students baptized "the nail" with graphic simplicity.

I raised money on my books. Gabrielle also appropriated my links, my new hat, and the queen of my pipes. She had a way of saying: "Does my big dog wish to please his little Gabrielle?" which was irresistible.

When she found that I was without money, without credit, and even in debt, having vainly exhausted the resources of my imagination to extract from my parents in far-away London an addition to my allowance, she left me calmly, without a word of pity, without a shadow of shame. She was of that class of women called lioness—doubtless because they know how to consume men.

And I loved her! What despair! She had moved away, they told me, to distant, almost unexplored parts which vague and mysterious expression described the Latin Quarter, "the right bank."

I walked with grief in the shade of the garden where I had met her. How dismal it was there now! There were many promenaders, children, lovers, but it seemed to me deserted.

"My life is ended," I said with the *naïveté* of twenty years. "Everything is hollow. Why am I here? I can never again be interested in anything."

I resolved to die! There was nothing left to be done, but choose a suitable way to disappear.

Fumes of charcoal! That was the mode of suicide for girls.

The dagger was very much used. The dramas of the day were full of Venetian, Florentine, Arabian, Castillian daggers, Spanish dirks and Damascus swords, with which the actors killed themselves very decently behind the scenes, and even on the stage.

But I had no money to buy a dagger.

There was the rope. That was vulgar; then, too, the hanged are so ugly.

There remained poison, but what poison? Arsenic was bourgeois, very bad form. The poison of the Borgias would have suited me. Many novels spoke of it. But the recipe seemed to be lost.

Should I jump out of the window? To frighten women and bespatter the pavement! No.

Die by starvation? I had too good an appetite.

I finally decided on a very simple and economical method, one which the mild weather (it was spring) made seasonable; I would drown myself.

I neither breakfasted nor dined on the day of my suicide. I smoked my last pipe, my stock of tobacco being exhausted.

At nightfall I walked down toward the Seine. The water was black. The full moon threw on the river a silvery light. Walking at random, I arrived at the Pont des Arts and resolved to end there a life which was intolerable to me without Gabrielle. The place seemed propitious. The bridge was deserted. Not a boat. Not a lantern.

I leaned against the balustrade and looked at the water running like a flood of ink. It dashed against the piers. I breathed the night air.

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"This is the last time," I said to myself, "and it is such a lovely evening!"

I thought quickly of all I was leaving, of my parents, my friends, my home in dear old dirty London, the art that inspired me, of my youth, and also of my immortal soul. I placed all these on one side, and my recollections of Gabrielle on the other, and the latter were the more weighty; they turned the scale. Tears came to my eyes.

"I must die." I murmured. "Good-bye all! One name more is about to be added to the martyrology of love."

Love! This is the holy name that a youth was giving to his miserable passion, to the absurd child's-play which was leading him to death. It is only later we learn that love lives by sacrifice, that it is the brother of hope, and that, far from killing, it gives strength to live.

I grasped the balustrade and was preparing to leap, when, suddenly, I noticed a young Frenchman standing near me on the bridge, about thirty feet away. Could one not kill himself without being interrupted? Had he come there to play the spy? No, he did not even seem to see me.

He was looking down at the water. The moonlight was so bright that I could see the details of his person and his clothes distinctly. Like me, he wore a large Rembrandt hat, a long coat, and trousers narrowing at the foot. He had a red silk handkerchief, long hair, full beard, a youthful form. He was a student, an artist, like myself. What was he doing there?

He was gazing at the Seine. He raised his eyes to heaven, passed his hand sadly across his forehead, breathed rapidly, took a few steps to the right, then to the left, stopped in the middle of the arch, and seemed to measure the distance with his eye. Was he about to commit suicide, too? Were all the young men killing themselves? The Latin Quarter would soon be depopulated.

I was vexed. Had I not selected this bridge for my personal use? Why had he not chosen the Pont Neuf? However, although the unknown disturbed me, I felt a certain sympathy for this brother in suicide. He appeared to be about my age, and perhaps similar motives had brought him there. The stranger threw down his hat, looked at the moon, passed his right leg over the balustrade. In three bounds I was upon him and pulling his coat tail.

"What are you doing, monsieur? Are you mad?"

He struggled.

"Let me alone."

I seized him around the body and held him.

"Let me alone. Attend to your own affairs. This is disgusting. What are you here for? Go away."

"But," I replied ingenuously, "I have just come to commit suicide."

"What! you, too?"

"Yes, I was about to leap when I discovered you."

He turned and stared at me.

"Ah! this is strange enough," he said as he sat astride the balustrade.

We gazed with curiosity at each other to see how men look who are about to kill themselves. He had a good face in spite of his terrible black beard.

"Love, of course?" he asked.

"Love," I sighed.

"My case exactly, love."

"At our age one seldom commits suicide for any other reason."

"Well, monsieur," he resumed, after a short silence, "since I have the pleasure of meeting a travelling companion, shall we drown together? Only let us measure our distance so as not to risk grappling in the water if one of us, governed by the instinct of preservation, should have the weakness to change his mind after the plunge is made. You know how to swim?"

"Like lead."

"Are you ready then?" he said. "Take care not to bruise yourself by striking against the pier. Stand between the piers. A little farther off—there—that's right. Count, one, two, three. At three we jump. I do not say *au revoir* to you, dear monsieur, but I am charmed to have made your acquaintance—too late unhappily to cultivate it. Well, I am ready."

My co-suicide counted "one—two——"

"Good-bye, Gabrielle," I cried.

But instead of counting three:

"Which Gabrielle?" demanded my unknown friend.

"She for whom I drown myself. What is that to you?"

"Gabrielle of the Luxembourg? Gabrielle who has a little black mole under her left eye?"

"Assuredly," I replied, "Gabrielle whom I love, and for whom I perish."

And I rushed forward, but he stopped me and grasped my arm.

"Wretch, traitor, felon," he shrieked. "You love Gabrielle, my Gabrielle? You have the presumption to commit suicide in her honour, when it is I who have come here to drown myself for her. You have taken Gabrielle from me! Swords! Knives! I want your blood, sir; I must have your blood!"

He danced with rage. He shook his fist.

I observed coolly that, as we were about to die, it would not be necessary to butcher each other. This seemed to him a reasonable argument. He gradually calmed down.

I learned that he was a student, that Gabrielle had abandoned him a fortnight since, at the very time I met her. Naturally, we continued to talk about her.

"Ah! my dear predecessor, what eyes she had, and what a silvery laugh! How jolly, and saucy, and fiery she was!" I babbled.

"What delightful times we had together," he replied; "at Robinson, at Viroflay! She sang like a bird. She had a rose-coloured parasol which cost me a half louis, I think."

"Yes, I know," I interrupted, "what those parasols and many other things cost."

"Well, my friend, it is evident that those gifts have been our ruin."

As one is talkative at twenty, and our hearts were overflowing, we began to discuss women in general, *à propos* of Gabrielle, and our love in particular, *à propos* of women. Our experience was brief; besides, we had perfect and decided theories which we were expounding both at the same time with lofty eloquence.

"How could it be otherwise?" philosophically concluded my rival. "She had a way of looking out of the corners of her eyes which turned me like a glove, and when she said: 'What will my big dog do to please his little Gabrielle?' I lost my senses."

"So did I. She called me her big dog, too, and it produced the same effect on me."

He smiled sardonically.

"My dear successor, I should not be surprised if at

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this very monent a third gentleman were not Gabrielle's big dog."

"Alas!" I replied, "you are an optimist. I am sure that Gabrielle possesses half a dozen dogs of our kind."

At this bitter thought I stove in my hat with a blow of my fist, and my rival tore his hair, a luxury which the abundance of his Merovingian mane allowed him.

"And is it for princesses of this quality," cried he, "that two good fellows like us wish to drink dirty water. That would be too idiotic!"

While jabbering we walked up and down, for the evening was cool. Just then we found ourselves at the end of the bridge, directly in front of the institute.

I spat to show my contempt for the "Temple of Classic Literature." My companion spat also, making a defiant gesture at the cupola.

"And these scoundrels of academicians, will it not delight them to learn that two romanticists with long hair have drowned themselves before their very door? Listen! the more I think, the more I believe that we ought to reflect before taking the fatal plunge. One can commit suicide but once. It is an important affair and deserves more consideration. First I should like to dine, for it is well known that wise decisions are made on leaving the table. There is an admirable restaurant near the Grande Chaumiere, which is open all night. My nurse's sister manages it. I have credit there, and can even take a friend. Will you accept?"

"Monsieur," I rejoined, "you are not a serious suicide. Go and dine. Let me drown in peace. Beside, I am not hungry."

I lied. I was hungry as a wolf, and my stomach was howling.

"My nurse's sister," continued my predecessor, "has a more abundant cuisine than can be found anywhere else in Paris. There are miraculous roasts, paties of gigantic proportions, delicious blood-puddings, juicy ham, not to speak of the fried potatoes which are ideal, the Burgundy cheese, and wine which would make you forget all the Gabrielles in the world," he insisted, ashamed of his disloyalty, and not wishing me to kill myself alone.

During this enumeration, hunger pressed me most cruelly, and I felt much admiration and tenderness for madam, the sister of my rival's nurse. However, I resisted.

"Well, monsieur, may you enjoy your dinner. Adieu."

Without paying any attention to me my companion continued:

"After the ham, the pudding, the patie, what do you say to a punch, and a fragrant pipe."

"Do you use lemon?" I asked in a feeble voice.

"Lemon? Punch would not be punch without lemon. Much lemon, my boy quantities of lemon."

With long strides, arm in arm we regained the Latin Quarter by the light of the moon.

"It is strange," I said to my rival, "there is nothing like suicide to give one a good appetite."

N. F. STUTTE.

THE WICKED MI SAN.

MR. AND MRS. CLEMENCE were going home for a year's leave—and going to take their two children with them. Mr. Clemence was a partner in a great firm of merchants who had a branch at Shanghai and had been out there for many years.

He had met his wife on one of his runs home and she had come out a year later to marry him. She liked the life out there very much. It seemed really very like England.

The European part of Shanghai has wide streets and fine buildings—the public gardens are well planted and well kept—and all along the wide boulevard by the quay trees are planted just as in a Continental town.

Then in Shanghai there is a really good cold season; in fact it is often too cold to be pleasant, and in the winter you have to wear much the same clothes as you do at home and as many furs as you can. Then in the summer you go away to a little seaside place, Pient Sin, where many other people of Shanghai go too, and you have shrimping parties and bathing parties and you all take there with you your Chinese carts and ponies—such sweet little ponies, that go so fast!

Life is by no means devoid of amusement in the north of China. In the winter the men have shooting parties and go away on the swamps further north for snipe; but if your husband is lazy or busy, that will not prevent your having game, for it is very cheap in the cold weather in Shanghai, and sometimes the market is simply crowded with snipe.

Europeans there have good, well-built stone houses in gardens, like villas at home; they keep cows and grow vegetables; the long shady road that leads to

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the Bubbling Well is like nothing so much as the London Road from Brighton through Preston Park; the houses and the gardens are just as good and just as large, and thoroughly comfortable. There are a few European shops, not very many, but of course you can order anything you want, to be sent up from Hong Kong by the weekly mail steamer.

Mrs. Clemence bought silks and furs from the dealers in Shanghai to take home—most lovely embroideries and sable skins. The Russian fur dealers take off the sable tails and sell the remainder of the skins to Chinese dealers for absurdly small prices, and Mrs. Clemence had an evening cloak lined with sable that would have cost a fortune at home. People out in these distant colonies always talk of "home," as if it were a Paradise, yet when they come back they miss the clear, blue sky of North China and the innumerable comforts they have left there and which cost so much more to procure in England.

The Clemences had looked forward to and discussed this leave, for more than two years before it came off. One difficulty was about servants on the voyage. To-to, the little girl of three, was so devoted to her Chinese amah; and yet what on earth should they do with her in an English house? To-to would make herself a nuisance on the voyage if she did not have Mi San, there was no doubt of that. Baby was really too little to care.

"That's all very well," said Mr. Clemence, "but how do you know Mi San will go to England? It is a dickens of a way from all her people."

"Oh, of course she will," said Mrs. Clemence, carelessly, "all the Chinese think it a very swell thing to have been to England."

"Well, take her if you like," said her husband, "but I warn you the Chinese sometimes turn very nasty when they find they are really away from their own country, and with only 'barbarians'—as they call us—about them."

Mrs. Clemence sounded Mi San about going and was surprised to find she had no enthusiasm on the matter at all—it was only after counting up on a Chinese counting-board, the number of dollars she would have collected together by her return, that she said she would go, and then it was in a depressed and doubtful manner. She took To-to for her walk that afternoon along to the Bubbling Well, near where there were seats under shady trees, and where the nurses of the neighbourhood met their friends.

Mi San's friend was the English baker's young man, who delivered the loaves every morning in a neat little hand-cart, painted red. Him, she was going to marry, when their united savings allowed of it. His name was Ann Ling, and he was a very good specimen of the stalwart Chinese of the Yang-tse-Kiang. To him Mi San confided her fears at going away across the wide seas.

"Fool that thou art," said Ann Ling, who was not polite. "Why fear? This England of the barbarians is only like the Rock of Hong Kong, but further off. 'Tis because their own land is so poor and small that they come to China. There is nought to fear, we are of a better race."

"It is not thus, however, that they speak," said Mi San, unbelievingly. "Often will the men tell to To-to of the beautiful land across the sea, and say this is a miserable country."

"Why, then, are they so desirous of living in it?" said Ann Ling, with some reason. "First they take one bit, and then another; I tell thee, Mi San, never were their eyes gladdened by so fair a land before. In all ways do they seek to please the Emperor. Myself have I seen a stone in the country beyond Tientsin, on which it is graven, that in the year of the Great Famine, the barbarians paid many lacs of tribute, long owing. Wherefore should they do this? Theirs is but a poor country, and it seeks a small piece of the Heavenly Empire. Be not afraid to venture forth, take of their dollars as many as can be got, and bring them back to the Flowery Land."

Mi San was much strengthened by this grand language; still she did not like going, but it was her duty to obey the counsels of her future husband, so that evening she told her mistress again that she was willing to go.

"This will save us ever so much bother, Henry," Mrs. Clemence said joyfully; "the children are so accustomed to her, and she is really very useful to me, myself."

"That's all right," said her husband, who was thinking much more of the sale of his horses and letting of his house, than of nurses and babies.

So it was all arranged, and soon the day came, when the big Messageries Steamer was waiting down at the mouth of the Yang tse Kiang, and the launch that goes up and down the twenty miles of the river to Shanghai, was to start from the quay. It was the weekly excitement, seeing all the lucky ones off, giving them flowers, and fruit, and cakes, and packets of tea for the voyage.

All the travellers were very joyful, even To-to, who appreciated highly the bustle and fuss; only Mi San was very sad, as she went on board the launch all alone. Her relatives lived in a farm-house ten miles away, and Ann Ling could not leave his work in the middle of the day to say farewell. True, last night he had presented her with a beautiful bun, on which her name was marked in currants. The launch puffed away from the quay. the whistle blew, and the crowd on the wooden platform waved excited farewells. Then the travellers threaded their way carefully through the many ships moored in the river, past two Russian gun-boats, two British cruisers, a German man-of-war, and loads of small schooners and trading vessels.

But Mi San's eyes were blinded with tears; she saw nothing of the bright June sunshine, She sat huddled up in a corner, of the saloon and paid no attention to To-to's talking. Mrs. Clemence did not see her, she was outside on the deck of the launch, with her husband and the baby, and much too full of her own concerns to care for Mi San's feelings. The stone farm-houses peeped out of the fruit-trees all along the river, and queer little houses, with the corners of the roofs turned up, stood on the edge of green rice-fields—the country all down the sides of the lower part of the Yang-tse Kiang is very well cultivated. It took them about four hours to go down the river, and then alongside the great mail steamer. The Chinese forts at the mouth of the estuary looked strong and solid.

"How easily they could blow us up," said Mrs. Clemence to the Captain, who was French, and did not quite understand her.

The ship had started from Yokohama and was pretty full, but Mr. Clemence had taken their berths some time before, and had secured two good cabins, one for himself and his wife, and another for the amah and the babies, with a skylight opening on to the deck, where the Chinese passengers spent their days. A strong smell of stale fish and opium and Chinese cooking came down this, but Mi San liked it, and thereby felt her spirits revive.

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"There are many, very many Chinamen on this ship," she said to herself: "it is not only I, alone, who sail away from my dear homeland."

At the children's meals there were two other amahs one a fat and solid old creature, who said nothing, going only as far as Hong Kong, and the other a person about Mi San's own age. Chinese food was given them for their meals. Mi San had never seen a big ship before, but she showed no surprise at anything; she was contented enough, she sat on deck most of the day playing with To-to, and nursing the baby, and Mrs. Clemence congratulated herself often on having brought her with them. Down the coast on the right hand, was the rugged shore of China—bare grey rocks that made the foam of the waves fly as they struck against them. The sea was rather rough, as it usually is in the Chinese waters, but the ship was a large one, and the motion was not too unpleasant. In about two days and a half they sighted Hong Kong, and steamed into the harbour under the shadow of the Peak. It was tremendously hot here, in June, with the open sea-breezes shut off by the cliffs. A lot of the Chinese passengers got off, but still a lot more came on for Singapore. Mi San, looking over the side, rejoiced, because she thought they were coming to England; at supper she said so to the other amah.

"Oh no," her friend answered, "they get off, as I do, at Singapore. No true Chinaman goes further than Singapore this way, save only a few merchants and ricksha men to Colombo. Then, for months after, you will see no Chinese—no face save only the round eyes and red hair of the barbarians."

This she said out of malice, for she was jealous of Mi San's chance of going to Europe. Mi San went away silently; something seemed to rise up within her and say—"Only once do you live, O Chinese maiden! What good do your dollars do, when you are perchance killed and eaten by these barbarians—when the rocks in China are left far away and you go to the dark Island in the sea?"

Her friend missed no opportunity of impressing on her mind the true wretchedness of England.

"Even tea will not grow there," she said; "the English have their tea from China, miserable red-headed devils that they are! The ones you see in China are improved by the light of that favoured land; in their own country they are savages. You may count on your ten fingers the women of China who have been there and lived to return."

So a great terror grew up in Mi San's heart, and increased daily till they reached Singapore. In the early morning they steamed slowly into the harbour, with the great forts towering down. Past the red and green islands dotted about the Straits, where the red earth is as red as in Devonshire, and where the continual daily showers make the most luxuriant vegetation in the world. Here Mi San summoned up courage to tell her mistress she must return to China, she could go no further away.

Mrs. Clemence was very angry, indeed. She had found the use of Mi San on board ship, and knew the difficulty she would have in getting a suitable person at a day's notice.

"It is impossible, quite impossible," she said. "I will not let you go—if you go off this ship I will tell the policeman to take you, and I will give you no money to take you back to China."

Mi San cried, and implored her to let her go back, but she was too timid to go off the ship without leave, and in the evening the ship sailed again, like a great inexorable Fate that carried her away, whether she wished it or not. A sullen gloom fell on Mi San; nearly all the Chinese had left the ship—her friend, the other amah, had spoken truth; no doubt, in all other things also she had spoken truth, and never would Mi San see the flowery land again.

She was silent and miserable, but she did her work, and To-to toddled by her happily, wherever she went. They went up the Straits of Malacca, and stopped at Penang. Mi San looked at the Malays in the boats, that crowded round the mail steamer, with disgust, these men were not Chinamen; a few Chinese here and there could be still seen, but they were much fewer in number than at Singapore.

"Soon I shall see them no more," Mi San said to herself, "we are already many days from China."

A growing hate to Mrs. Clemence filled her heart—she watched her mistress talk and amuse herself on deck, and for every light word, she hated her the more.

It had been a very hot day. The last point of Sumatra was fading away on the horizon, dinner was over, and all the passengers were lying about in long chairs on deck; some playing whist or piquet, and some too lazy to do anything at all. Only the soft rush of the great steamer through the water was to be heard. Suddenly, a faint splash was heard—then another—but they were not loud enough to be noticed, had not a sailor called out "Child overboard!"

All was changed in a minute. The cry was caught up from one to the other, whistles were sounded and bells rang—not least, the heart of every mother on board stood still with fear. Mrs. Clemence seized her husband's arm.

"Henry, the amah," she whispered, a dreadful prevision of what had happened seizing her heart.

"I will go down and find the babies at once," he said, "don't anticipate evil, dear."

But she came with him, and together they hurried below. She went straight to the children's cabin, where only an hour before she had seen the two sleeping, so securely. Now, there was no one there!

Mr. Clemence rushed out again, calling Mi San—there was no answer; his wife stood in the cabin, stunned, unable to think, almost unable to feel. By degrees, the other women, whose children were safe, gathered round and tried to rouse her to action. One of them, a Mrs. Findlay, turned over everything in the cabin, in the vain hope of finding some clue to the tragedy. Under the mattress of the upper berth, nearly dead, she found the baby. To lift him out was the work of a minute—a few seconds more, and the poor little creature would have been beyond all help, for the amah had evidently done her best to suffocate him.

Of To-to there was no sign, and the dreadful fact soon dawned on everybody that the amah had first thrown the child out of the port-hole in the passage, and then jumped into the sea herself. The square opening of the nearest port-hole had been lifted, and the wide open space was large enough to easily let pass the slim figure of the amah. The ship was stopped, and for two hours boats were out searching for the bodies, but the quest was hopeless from the first. There is a very strong tide in the Bay of Bengal, that sets to the south, and on the dark waste of waters, the two bodies—the murderess and her victim—may have been carried miles in a very short space of time.

So, in the middle of that miserable night, the ship went on, carrying with it the mother, who vainly longed to share her child's fate herself.

SADI GRANT.

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NANINE.

"Oh! what shall I do? What shall I do? What shall I do?" This was her tragic voice; Nanine could not help it. It was part of her nature, even when quite alone to use her stage tricks.

She threw herself on the sofa in the most affecting attitude, and looked volumes in the fire. She had a way of looking; she would say "good-bye," to a friend, and look as if to say: "I love you. Oh! how I love you! When shall we meet again in this sad world? Perhaps never!" In all probability her thoughts were: "Oh what a duck of a hat! It would suit me better than you too; I wonder where you bought it."

Now, however, her flippant little soul was stirred. There was a sickly smell of flowers which annoyed her. She went over to the table, and taking a huge bouquet of lilies—trophies of last night's success—threw them in the fire.

"Faded!" she shuddered. "They were fresh last night. The heated atmosphere of the theatre makes them die quicker. The atmosphere is stifling!" She clutched at her collar as if she felt the sensation then. "Am I faded?" She walked over to the long mirror. "Am I faded?"

The mirror showed her a slim, fragile figure, with a pale oval face, surrounded by quantities of brown, wavy hair, and the eyes that looked back at her—well, every leading paper had written many a paragraph about them. Nanine was the star actress—Nanine was the rage. Every little amateur actress aspired to be a Nanine, and was so, too, in the eyes of her fond relatives. "Nanine brown" was the colour of the day, for hair and everything else.

"Yes, I look pale; two fainting fits to-day—I must take care, Harold said so. He's always looking after my health, but then he lives so near, and well—if he only had a practice! If it were not for Lord Borrodaile, if Harold were not so——"

Nanine marry a penniless student! Nanine, who could pick and choose among the peers of the realm; who could be "my Lady," ten times a day if she chose!

A bell sounded; she threw herself on the sofa in her most becoming style, when "Lord Borrodaile" was announced. She just gave him time to get the full effect of her pose, to see how delightful she looked in the fire-light. Then, with a well-bred little start, she rose and welcomed him. "How nice of you to come! Sit down." She waved to a seat.

Lord Borrodaile was enchanted. It was the same voice and the same look she used with her lover in Act IV. of the new play. She pressed a bell; he expected a fairy to appear, but a very ordinary parlourmaid came instead. "Tea, Martin."

Tea was over. Lord Borrodaile was fidgety! Nanine wished he would go. Yes! he was titled, rich, handsome, but he bored her, and she wished he would go. He had never called in this *tête-à-tête* way before. It was a distinct failure. It came at last with a gasp.

"Nanine, I love you! You must know I love you."

He had studied this speech, he had seen similar ones in novels, he had noticed in her love scenes that this was the usual style of the lover. There was something missing in his tone. Nanine with her quick instincts knew it. It felt like rehearsal. Lord Borrodaile watched her.

"Nanine, may I call you Nanine?"

She smiled. "May I call you Nanine?" Why, the call boys and scene-shifters said it among themselves; the walking gentleman said it to her face.

"See, I do not hurry you; I dare not suggest as yet a ring." He caught her by the hand. "But this for the moment, answer me to-morrow night." He slipped a heavy gold chain on her wrist, kissed her and was gone.

She shuddered. It was cold that chain and heavy. A chain, too, with a padlock; where was the key? She tried violently to take it off, it was too tight. "He has the key." She gave a hollow little laugh, "I wear the chain, how cold it is!"

"Victorious!" Borrodaile hugged himself with delight. She had not promised to marry him, but she would, of course. Why, hundreds of mammas were angling for him all over London, suburbs and country—Borrodaile of Borrodaile Towers, with ancestors dating back centuries. Nanine! why no one even knew her parentage. True, she was beautiful; beauty fades; he had never looked upon it in that light when contemplating his own good looks, though. Only an actress! actresses were the fashion. Fashions change and she was clever enough to know it.

At his club they had guessed Borrodaile's little game and betted high stakes, too, that he would not win. "Nanine will surprise us all some day—disappear with a penniless boy—these southern natures are always impulsive, romantic, don't you know."

Borrodaile had devised a plan; he would win, and they should know of his victory, and had trotted down to his club full of it the day before. "See this?" he held up the massive gold chain. "Look well at it, stake your last sou, Nanine will wear this to-morrow night. Go down to the theatre, look, if it is so, know I am accepted."

It was agreed. Borrodaile booked the stage box. The more he thought of it the more delighted he felt. It

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had been a grand idea, he knew well the size of her slender little wrist. On opening the chain it would go on easily; closed, it was far too tight to pass over the hand. It had been made on purpose with a tiny padlock and key—nothing else would open it. To a lady with her lady's maid always within reach this would be no inconvenience. That he had kept the key was of course an accident. The mechanism he had not explained to his friend; all is fair in love and war. A scrap of conscience left over perhaps from his youth made him feel rather mean.

* * * * *

An Italian organ woman was playing one of the latest tunes outside the stage door of the theatre. Nanine, emerging from her carriage, directed her maid to give her some money. She was always good to the poor. Italians appealed to her, for was not she born on Italy's sunny shores! The woman watched her till she was quite out of sight. She was olive-complexioned, with marvellous eyes, almost as fascinating as Nanine's. She counted her gains, and evidently well-satisfied pushed the organ up a side street, and leaving it in the charge of an acquaintance, made her way to the gallery door and patiently waited to be admitted.

In her dressing-room Nanine rested. She looked beautiful in her white satin and diamonds, but beneath the rouge there was a distinct pallor. Elise detected it.

"Mademoiselle, take a glass of champagne."

"No, thanks."

"Mademoiselle will faint; two faints to-day already. You worry over this chain. Monsieur—hem! Mademoiselle. Mademoiselle's friend will give her the key—one turn it will be open."

Mademoiselle did not hear, she was deep in thought.

"If he will marry me in spite of all, I will accept him; yes, I will tell him all, and then——"

"Overture. Ov-er-ture, please."

Nanine mused on.

"Overture, ladies, please. Beginners for the first act. Be-gin-ners, please."

Oh! how that call-boy worries! She started up.

There was a polite knock at the door.

"They are ready for you, Mademoiselle Nanine."

It was the stage-manager's voice.

"Mademoiselle!" Elise ran forward with the smelling salts. Nanine was nearly off again. "Mademoiselle Nanine, they are gagging."

"Let them gag."

She pulled herself together and swept out of the room. The orchestra struck up.

She always entered to music in this play. It was one of her small weaknesses, and the author had arranged it to oblige her.

A loud burst of applause greeted the entrance of Nanine.

The woman in the first row of the gallery became excited. In her excitement she stood up and that created a disturbance. She was blind and deaf to all save Nanine, who, on her entrance, carrying masses of costly white flowers, looked radiant. The woman flung something over the rail. "Sit down, will yer." She was roughly forced back in her place. "What are yer thinking of? Flowers? Who wants your flowers? Lidies don't throw things at gentlemen's bald heads a-sitting in the stalls. If yer wants to send them, give 'em to them music chaps. They'll hand 'em up, or behind the scenes" (with a loud laugh) "if yer that intimate."

Her flowers were useless; they had struck an elderly gentleman at the back of the stalls. He had momentarily started, then fixed his attention on the play once more. And the tiny bunch of Neapolitan violets, to which a note was attached, had fallen unheeded. It was a touching play. Between Acts I. and II. there was a wait, in which handkerchiefs were in vogue.

The Italian woman closed her eyes, the tears slowly welled down her cheeks. It was not of the play she was thinking, but of the past. Scene after scene returned. It was cold; with aching arms she was turning her organ; at her side was a child, a little dark child singing and dancing. A gentleman came up, talked, and gave her some coppers. He seemed interested in the child, inquired where they lived, and called. Then all was arranged. He would take the child, have her trained. She would be famous. There was only one condition—the mother must keep out of the way. He would pay her return passage to Italy if she liked. Out of the way she must go. To see her would interrupt the child's education—would ruin her career. To ruin her career, well, if that was her intention, she could keep the child. It had been a struggle.

The big drum of the orchestra disturbed the reverie of Nanine's mother. The curtain went up. Nanine was discovered surrounded by flowers. How ethereal she looked, again in white, this time soft white draperies, no jewellery save a heavy gold chain which gleamed on her white arm. She was softly singing to herself. Suddenly there was a catch in her voice. Consternation, great consternation! Nanine had fallen forward. The woman in the gallery rushed from her seat. Resistance was fruitless, in a moment she had gone.

* * * * *

On the green room couch lay Nanine; on one side stood Lord Borrodaile, Harold Methuen on the other, Elise bending over her with smelling salts; at the foot, much perturbed, was the stage-manager.

The door opened suddenly; in rushed the Italian woman. There was a start of surprise. Only Nanine, slowly opening her eyes, exclaimed, "My mother." They made way for her.

Lord Borrodaile looked at the stage-manager; the stage-manager looked down, but no contradiction was written on his face. My lord gave a low whistle, and departed.

"I must be off," said the manager. "Any medical aid required?"

"Only what I can give," answered Methuen.

The play continued; the understudy had reached her goal. Nanine was again unconscious.

"Don't move her, Elise," said Methuen, "put her things together; by the time the carriage comes she can be moved."

Elise withdrew. The patient roused. "Flowers all faded. The chain! take it; I don't want the chain. It's cold, it's heavy." She opened her eyes. There bending over her stood her mother and Harold Methuen, hand in hand.

She raised herself. "The cue, prompter; quick, the cue."

Harold bent over her. "I love you, I love you."

She rubbed her eyes. "Yes, cue, love."

"I love you with all my heart."

"Curtain, quick, curtain."

"No, dearest, this is the beginning of the act."

She looked from him to her mother in a dazed way, and then recognition came.

"Not acting, it's real all real. Oh, I am happy now."

Queenie Sichel.

Google

Hunted by Baboons.

A Story of the Wheel in South Africa.

I.

WELDON and May came down to the breakfast room of the little hotel at almost the same moment, and together revelled in the cool fragrance of the early morning.

"I vote we start at once," said Weldon, "In this bracing air we should make Cape Town easily by lunch time."

"I don't know about that," May, who knew the land, answered. "It's not more than forty miles, but you know, as we near the bay, the roads are pretty rough travelling—any amount of hills, and our South African roads are not laid out, like those in old England, to tempt wheelmen. We'll be doing well if we get in in time for a bath before supper."

"Whew! You must expect to walk half the way?"

"That's about it," said May, "but never mind, it's the finest scenery in the world."

"H'm, that's rather a tall order. I suppose, now, you couldn't scare up a lion or something to make the scene more interesting. This is my last day's ride, you know, and, really, you ought to dig out something sensational, something South African."

"Far too far south for lions or big game, old man," said the Afrikander. "We may sight a deer or so, but I can promise nothing more hair raising, unless you care for baboons. There are a few bands of them between us and Cape Town, I believe."

"Monkeys? 'Pshaw!" said Weldon, "they're beneath notice. I did hope to meet a lion in the path. Ah! breakfast."

The young Afrikander and his visitor, an old chum from home, were quickly out after a good meal to overhaul, like experienced riders, their bicycles before starting on their last day's ride before the latter's return to England. May frowned when he discovered a big Kaffir busily cleaning his wheel, without orders. A Kaffir is not usually skilled in cycles, and more apt to mar than mend when he ignorantly meddles with them. May pushed him aside roughly, and the next instant, as the Kaffir faced him, made a dash for him.

"Hold him, Weldon," he cried, and at the shout there came running the Dutch landlady and other black servants from the roadside inn. The Kaffir, however, was slippery as a snake, twisted out of May's hands and dashed into the woods about the hotel like a fox.

"What was the matter?" cried the surprised spectators.

"The rascal!" cried May. "That fellow worked in my father's store in Cape Town, and is wanted for theft. I don't suppose he will come back, but, if he does, there's a reward offered for him at police headquarters. What was he doing with the bicycles?"

"He clean for baas," a servant volunteered, but May and Weldon examined their machines with some anxiety. It is not a good thing to have one's wheel cleaned by rascals, when a long lonely ride on a rough little-travelled road is in front. But the young men could find nothing wrong.

"He had no time," said the landlady reassuringly, "He only knew this morning the baas were here, and asked me which way the baas were going. He went to the baas' wheels to clean them, but I sent him to his own work, and that was only ten minutes ago. So the rascal had no time to hurt them."

"Oh! He knew I was here, did he?" May asked. "Did he see us last night?"

"When the baas paid the bill before going to breakfast this morning."

"There's something funny about that," said May to Weldon, as they rode away together in the glorious morning. "If the beggar saw me he must have recognised me, and one would think would keep out of my road. His was a daring robbery with assault on the watchman, and I'd certainly hand him over to the police if I caught him. Fancy his impudence! Starting to clean my bicycle."

"To tamper with it," said Weldon. "That was his game, I expect—perhaps to be revenged on you, but more likely——"

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Pastimes.
1d. WEEKLY.

"What?"

"Well, you say it is a lonely rough road. Perhaps your Kaffir would have liked us to walk when our machines broke down, especially as he saw you pay the bill, and knew you had money on you."

"I didn't think of that," said May. "However, no harm is done—he didn't have time."

They sped away, their knapsacks on their backs, at a good pace across a lovely country, and, in the bright morning air of that wonderful climate, soon forgot all about the Kaffir thief. For a while, after leaving the inn, the road ran smoothly and on a fairly level grade round the broad shoulder of a mountain.

"Fairly good road," said May, "but it makes our way much longer. Across the mountain would shorten it by two-thirds."

"The usual path for foot passengers I suppose, but rather impossible for wheelmen," said the other. "Now we're coming to a bad piece."

* * * * *

As one approaches Table Bay from the inland, great mountains guard the water. Through these are numerous passes, called "Kloofs," and, while the scenery along them is of the grandest, they are hard roads for cyclists to tackle.

The riders were now well into the hills, and the Englishman found to his disgust, that he had to spend as much time pushing his bicycle as in the saddle. The sun, also, was now noon-high, and the friends grew silent, mopping their brows, as they climbed the winding roads of the Kloof.

At one of these ascents, May dragged a long way behind, and Weldon reached the top far in advance of his chum. He sat down to rest and enjoy the shade of a tree, and as he threw himself on his back, he glanced at the surrounding country.

It was a comparatively bare spot he was on. The woods ceased for a space, and a stretch of moorland spread broadly out. This was dotted with big black and grey fungus-speckled boulders, and seemed a dreary waste.

Weldon cast his eyes over it before he lay down, lighting his pipe, and saw no manner of living thing.

A minute afterwards he raised his head, and the pipe almost fell from his mouth with surprise.

Sixty yards away, on a big rock, sat a queer-looking man gravely observing the stranger, and remaining absolutely still. Weldon looked from his right where the queer figure had so suddenly appeared to his left, and there also on another rock sat another strange looking man, as grave, as silent, as motionless, observing him.

Weldon looked from one to the other, and his glance surveyed the open space at the back of, and between, these apparent sentinels.

On a large flat-topped rock sat in a silent row, about a dozen similar figures, all very grave, all very observant, the steady gaze of every one of them concentrated on the bicyclist. Weldon was a little short sighted, and he rose to his feet, putting on his eyeglasses to study these strange people more minutely.

"They don't look like the natives—either Hottentot or Kaffirs. Surely they can't be the dwarf Bushmen."

Then his glasses dropped and he threw back his head with a loud laugh.

"Baboons!" he cried. "The ugly rascals—that's certainly one against me!"

At that shout, the little conclave on the rocks was greatly startled and there at once commenced among them such an indignant chattering as might have been in a decorous meeting of church elders, disturbed by a rude intrusion. The sentinels scampered from their posts to join in the general discussion, and many of the almost human monkeys began to grimace at Weldon angrily, and shake their paws threateningly.

But this made him only laugh more loudly. Their jabbering rage seemed so futile and ridiculous. A cheeky little member of the band suddenly ran out in advance of the rest, and with a gamin-like expression of contempt and anger picked a stone from the ground and threw it at the wheelman.

The rock in the hands of a stouter and older baboon might have hit Weldon, but the cheeky little ape's arms were not yet muscular enough. The missile fell short. Still the accuracy of the throw delighted the Englishman, who had never thought that monkeys of any species could attack in this way. He cried out, laughing:

"Good for you, you young scamp, but you must do better if you want to learn to play cricket. Like this, you know."

Lost in enjoyment of this unexpected fun with the baboons, he did not notice that May had come up the hill, and was now looking on with suprise.

Weldon stooped to pick up a fair sized pebble, and, before May could jump forward, crying out "Don't!" the Englishman had hopped a moment on one foot, and let fly the stone with skilful arm.

It was, in its results, too well thrown by far. It caught the unfortunate monkey, who had thrown the rock, fairly in the neck, and he toppled over like a ninepin, and lay quite still.

Weldon was astonished and remorseful at the success of his throw; the little prone figure looked so human and helpless.

He turned to May with a laugh, but was surprised to see his friend leap for his bicycle, and to hear him call out:

"Come on; you've done it now; let's get out of this!"

"What's the matter?"

"Come on! Don't you know a band of baboons are fearless when together and angry? They have been known to drive away a lion, and we haven't even a revolver between us. Come on! See, they're after us!"

Weldon looked at the group which he had found so grave and silent.

Now they were wildly chattering, crying out, and lamenting over the senseless body of their young comrade.

Suddenly, they formed together, and, with a series of great bounds and running, now on all four paws, now on two, they charged on the two friends.

Rather frightened at the consequence of teaching a baboon how to throw, Weldon jumped on his bicycle, and, just as he did so, the baboons resorted to their

favourite weapon, and, seizing here and there rocks of large size, they discharged a volley of them after the fugitives.

The stones fell all about the riders; one struck May's front wheel and almost capsized him, but they themselves were unhurt.

The road now wound down a hill, which was too rough and steep for more than cautious riders, but, urged forward by the cries of the baboons and the continued stone-throwing, the friends dashed down it at full speed.

"The brutes are following," yelled Weldon, as a rock grazed his head, and, looking back, May saw that, with incredible swiftness, the pack were bounding behind, never ceasing their revengeful cries, and their artillery fire of stones.

But the cyclists gained.

The road turned sharply and shut them from the view of the monkeys, and then they came to the foot, and, to their disgust, saw yet another steep hill rise in front.

Still the yelps of the baboons sounded in the rear.

"Put your back into it, old man!" yelled May, and the two young men rushed down the last few yards of hill with such speed that the velocity gained carried them up the ascent.

Stooping low they worked the pedals with all their might, but half way up the wheels began to wiggle-waggle, and they had to jump off.

"Push on!" cried Weldon, shoving his machine ahead.

They were still, however, far from the top when the raging and vindictive baboons came chattering to the foot of the hill, and uttered a sort of triumphant screech as they sighted the enemy.

The brutes bounded up the hill in pursuit, with great cunning seeking a shelter from retaliation in the trees and bushes of the roadside.

By leaps and bounds they gained and soon the stone-throwing recommenced, and now both men were struck more than once, blood flowing from a cut in Weldon's head.

"The demons!" he gasped. "They're more like savage men than brute beasts!"

"I wish you'd realised that before you disturbed them," his reproachful comrade grunted.

At last they were at the top, and a declivity again stretched before them, just as the stones came down in a shower. The vengeful apes seemed to have no idea of relinquishing the chase. The riders sped down at break-neck speed, and now they thought they were fairly and safely away. The road twisted and wound. Before long they were out of sight, and soon after the yelps of the pack sounded more faintly.

"Thank Heaven!" cried May, who was a little in advance. "That was a tight hole."

"I'll know better another time than to meddle with a pack of these monkeys!" Weldon gasped. "Halloa!"

They were turning a corner at full speed, the danger behind rendering them blind to any in front. As Weldon cried out, May ran up against an obstruction, and was pitched far over the handlebars, a good ten feet, into some bushes by the wayside.

There was no possibility for his friend to escape; he was scorching directly behind, and the descent was steep.

He struck the obstruction and his chum's bicycle together, and, like an arrow sped after another, he also shot through the air and lighted behind May. There, hidden by the bushes, they lay still and senseless.

Immediately, from the other side of the road, where the wood was dense, a brutal black face, with wide yellowish eyeballs peeped out, listened for a moment, then leaped to the two lifeless men, and began to rifle their pockets.

It was the same Kaffir who, in the morning, had been almost caught by May—the man who was wanted in Capetown for assault and robbery. Excited by the sight of the gold which May had shown when settling the hotel bill, disappointed in tampering with the wheels, he had been in time to tie a grape vine taut across the path, with almost fatal results to the white men whose bicycles lay smashed in the road.

The Kaffir rogue lost no time in searching his late master's pockets, but he had hardly begun to do so when he was arrested in the act by a strange tumult up the hill. Fearful of capture he left his prey, and ran across the road to his former hiding-place.

He was not half way across when a huge old grey baboon, far in advance of the others, bounded round the bend, a big rock in its forepaw. It saw the Kaffir and, with a scream of fury, discharged the missile.

The stone struck squarely between the robber's eyes, and he sank to his knees, stupefied with terror and blinded with blood. In an instant the pack came up, yelping, and immediately they set upon the unhappy wretch, stoning him until he was a shapeless heap—quite dead.

They sniffed about him for a while, apparently seeing no difference between him and the one who had thoughtlessly killed their small companion, and at last, chattering triumphantly, they went back, satisfied with their revenge.

When the two wheelmen at length came to their senses, the lonely road was very quiet and still. They soon learnt what a swift and dreadful punishment had befallen the robbing Kaffir, whose stone-surrounded black body, battered almost beyond recognition, lay by the side of the grape vine, witness of the man's attempt to kill and steal.

The bicycles were useless, so they had a long silent walk to the nearest station of the mounted police, where they told of their escape from the baboon pack, and still stranger escape from robbery and murder.

P. Y. Black.

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OLD PHILLINGHAM'S DAUGHTER.

WHEN poor old Phillingham pegged out there was a general feeling amongst us that something ought to be done for his daughter. Masters suggested that she should be "finished" at a boarding-school, but the bare idea of Roma going through the mill of a polite education roused our ire.

"Why you'd break her spirit, spoil her temper, and ruin her figure," cried Bob Owen, "Roma's not the girl to endure intellectual, any more than physical stays let me tell you."

Masters agreed with a whimisical shrug, and tentatively put forward proposition number two.

"Was there any profession or calling for which she could be trained. She has a splendid voice, and a face like hers would make a fortune on the stage."

"I don't like the idea of old Phil's girl becoming an actress," said Owen.

"Has she any artistic taste? You've seen more of her of late years than I."

"Oh, as for taste, she wouldn't be her father's daughter without it, but I don't know that her talent lies in any special direction. I don't think she'd make a successful painter, for one might as well expect a blackbird to pipe to order, as for Roma to conform to rule."

"But, my dear Owen, she'll have to do something."

"Exactly, but the question is, what will she do?"

There was a long pause. Masters looked sarcastic, Owen frowned, and the rest of us gave vent to our feelings by wishing ardently that Phillingham had deferred his decease for a year or two at least.

"Best speak to the girl herself," said Sketchley at last. "Roma has plenty of sense in that pretty head of hers, and she'll make up her mind in next to no time."

"If it's me you're talking of," interrupted a sweet voice with a touch of the brogue, "I've made it up already, and thank you kindly."

"My dear child, how did you come here?" asked Owen anxiously. It was raining cats and dogs, and of all nights the most unfit for a girl to be out.

"Walked," said Roma laconically, stretching out a slender foot, shod, as we mournfully observed, in the oldest and most shapeless of shoes.

"I'm wet," she added, slipping off her cloak. "I want a good warm, a comfortable chair and a cigarette."

"But Roma—" commenced Owen reprovingly.

She checked him with a sudden movement, clasping her hands on his arm, with a pleading expression on her sweet upturned face, curiously childlike in the firelight's glow.

"I know what you are going to say, Bob, and in the words of Punch, take my advice and 'don't.' You surely wouldn't have me stay all by myself, and eat my heart out in the darkness. I always went everywhere with Dad," with a little catch in her voice, "rain or snow, it never stopped me. Why should it now?"

After that there was nothing more to be said. Bob settled her in his favourite chair, Masters packed her up with cushions, and Sketchley, with the gravest air possible, handed her a cigarette.

"And now," she said after a bit, "suppose you all go on where you left off. I believe you were talking about me?"

"Quite right, my child," said Sketchley, "we were just discussing your future."

"Come to any conclusion?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, we decided to refer the question to you."

"So I should think," laughed the girl. "At seventeen if ever, one should have views of one's own."

"Are you only seventeen, Roma?"

"Why, Bob, you ought to know. Haven't you taken me out every birthday ever since I could remember?"

Bob said nothing but I noticed a queer expression in his eyes as he bent to make up the fire, which set me thinking.

"But I am getting away from my subject," continued she. "So far as I can understand, you are all wondering what is to become of me, now—now that I'm left alone."

"We thought, Roma," broke in Masters eagerly, "that if you would choose a profession or calling—painting—singing—anything you prefer, you couldn't do better than study at it for the next two or three years."

The girl nodded—"And I suppose you meant to send the hat round for the exes, didn't you?"

"Well, my child," said Bob, "and surely we have a right to look after our old friend's daughter."

"I'll never dispute that," she answered in a low tone, "only," raising her head with a bright smile, "I'll have to be looked after in my own fashion."

Masters groaned.

"What mad nonsense are you after now?" he asked testily.

Roma glanced at us all under her lowered eyelids, then taking the cigarette from her lips, she answered from a cloud of smoke:—

"I'm going to be a model."

"The deuce you are," said Masters. "I won't consent to any such preposterous nonsense. What do you say, Owen?"

But Roma smiled in a sort of confident fashion, as Bob prepared to answer.

"You won't go against me, will you?" she asked.

"I can't give an opinion yet," he replied gravely, "it is not at all what I was prepared for."

The girl flushed, and a mutinous glance crept into her eyes.

"I didn't think *men* were so mean-minded," she said, the scornful emphasis bearing witness that women in her estimation were on a decidedly lower plane than the lords of creation. "Here, I have sat to all of you ever since Bob painted me a wee mite of three years old. Why," she added proudly, "I don't believe that anyone of you have sent out a figure painting for years, that did not owe its eyes, hair, hands or feet to me. Is it true or not?"

Somewhat abashed we were constrained to admit it was.

"Exactly," she replied, "and yet now when I propose to adopt as a profession what as hitherto only been a pastime you all looked shocked and groan. I don't suppose you'll treat me any differently when you pay me for my services than when you had them gratis."

"Well," said Masters slowly, "if you'll undertake to limit your connection to your father's friends, it might perhaps be managed."

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"Not a bit of it," laughed Roma, "my father's friends shall always have first call on me, but it's impossible to suppose that they could find sufficient work to keep me genuinely employed all the year round."

"In that case, Roma," said Masters gravely, "you will practically place yourself on a level with a professional model?"

"Well, why not?"

It was difficult to explain exactly why. The girl was so utterly fearless, so innocently unconventional, that it seemed impossible to tell her that by adopting such a calling she would in the eyes of Mrs. Grundy at all event lose caste.

"As to terms," continued the girl composedly, "I shall accept neither a penny more nor less than the usual rates for a first class sitter. Half a guinea a day."

"Come," she added, as none of us broke the silence, "don't be cross. Can't you see how impossible it would be to let you, any of you, pay for me for the next two or three years? Charity, even when bestowed most lovingly, is still charity, and I will have none of it."

"But, my dear, where will you live. Who will look after you?"

"I shall keep on a room in our old lodgings where as you know, the landlady has always been most kind."

"If it's me you're talking of," interrupted a sweet voice, with a touch of the brogue, "I've made it up already, and thank you kindly."

"Well, if you must, Roma, I suppose we can't stop you."

But that didn't suit Miss Wilfulness at all. Having achieved her point, she now set about to win our approval, and so well did she succeed, that the younger half of us, at any rate, were convinced of the propriety of her plan before the evening was over.

Mis Roma was at length in a high state of delight. How charming she looked with her wonderful red gold hair, dark eyes, and lips scarlet as the poppy in the corn. After a while she sang to us some wild gipsy melody, that she had caught up from a Polish fellow who used to hang about the studio.

At last Bob insisted it was time for her to go, and, pout as she might, he carried her off. I can see her now as she stood at the door, the cloak half falling from her shapely shoulders, a cigarette waved defiantly towards us, repartees, and jests upon her lips until the last.

"What a beautiful child it is," said Masters with a sigh. "And what a lot of suffering she's got before her."

"What an idea, pain and Roma can never go together. She's as lighthearted as a bit of thistledown."

"So says youth, with its crude experiences, and immature judgments. She's but a child now, and before she passes into womanhood, she'll have to love, and unless I'm much mistaken she'll take it very hardly."

Afterwards Masters' words came back to me with a curious pang.

* * * *

SOMEHOW or other things settled themselves very much as Roma wished. We tried to limit her connection as much as possible to those who had known her father, and were, therefore, acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and succeeded fairly well in so doing. Sketchley constituted himself a sort of chaperone in Bob's absence, and used to turn up most days to fetch her home from any of the studios where she might be engaged. Bob, by-the-bye, had gone off on a sketching tour to the south of France, whither he proposed to return the following spring.

I rather think Roma missed him more than we suspected. She had always looked upon old Bob as a sort of second father, though when you came to think of it, he was not so fatherly—as to years—after all. He was only thirty-eight, but somehow or other, his grave ways, and quiet, self-contained manner made him appear a regular middle-aged sort of buffer—who had left his youth far behind him.

As to his pictures, they were just the very sort that you would not expect a man like Bob to produce. Insensibly one presupposed him a painter of half lights, peaceful landscapes, placid cows moonily munching in a field of daisies. It was nothing less than marvellous that his conceptions should be so vividly dramatic, his colouring so daring, his technique so unconventional.

Bob had been gone about three months when Roma told us that Philip Tremaine, the well-known R. A., had asked her to let him have some sittings.

"It's a great compliment, isn't it?" she said. "You know he wouldn't paint anybody whose face is just the least bit out of drawing. How thankful I ought to be that my nose runs straight to

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Bob had gone off on a sketching tour to the South of France.

the end of the chapter, instead of flying off at a tangent in 'mid-air,'" and she stroked that well-shaped feature complacently.

"You don't seem so very pleased," she added, surprised at the quietness with which her announcement was received.

We were all assembled at Sketchley's, the poor chap didn't boast a studio in the proper sense of the word, but did his work in a large attic with a sloping roof, but a strong north light.

Anyway, it was good enough for him to turn out some first-class black and white work, which ought to have won him more recognition than it did.

"Well, you see, Roma," said our host dubiously, "Tremaine is rather a corker, 'always hung on the line,' so to speak, and therefore with a lofty contempt for those unfortunates who're 'skied,' or left upon the floor. None of us know him—except Bob—and he's not the sort of man one could call upon *sans cérémonie*."

"I don't see what you're aiming at, Jack," said Roma.

"My dear," said Masters, who by virtue of his having two or three girls of his own, always spoke with a certain authority, "if you sit to Tremaine, you'll be going right out of our set. After him I fear we shall appear very small beer indeed. And we don't want to lose you, Roma."

The girl tossed her hair from her eyes with a quick, impatient movement.

"If you think I'm such a cad as that," she exclaimed, "you'd better have nothing else to do with me."

The door banged, and there was a sound of light footsteps flying down the stairs.

"She'll come back again presently," said Sketchely composedly. "I'm doing her head for *The Crayon* and Roma never breaks an engagement."

Sure enough in about an hour she reappeared. All traces of temper vanished, as sweet and charming as only she could be. Nothing more was said of Tremaine, but a day or two after I met her just outside his studio. I'm not an observant fellow as a rule, but I couldn't help noticing that she looked prettier than ever, and that her costume—always tasteful if a wee bit careless—was put on with more attention to detail than she usually bestowed. Gloves perfectly fitting, and wonderful to relate buttoned straight, shoes as dainty as the feet they covered.

"Why, Roma," I exclaimed, "this is indeed most wonderful. I don't remember to have seen you for ages in a pair of gloves."

"Don't tease," she interrupted. "I'm bound to look tidy at Mr. Tremaine's."

"H'm! Since when have you honoured your artistic friends by the prefix of 'Mr.' Mostly you appear to forget that they possess anything but nicknames. I fully expected you to allude to the great R. A. by this time as Phil."

She flushed a little under my gaze.

"He's different from all of you, silly boy," she said and ran up the steps.

We didn't see so much of her as usual for the next month, and when she did look in it was usually only a very hurried visit. It happened that I was the only one at that time to whom she was sitting, and save for the two or three hours a week that she spent in the studio I rarely saw her.

Somehow or other she eluded us. Sketchley tried to corner her, as to the neglect she showed her old friends, but she answered in a fashion so unlike herself—the careless, charming, brilliant Roma we all knew, that no further reproaches were attempted.

"Jack," she said with a thrill in her voice, "you don't mean it, you can't mean it, that you think I have grown forgetful, ungrateful to you all. Why, I should be the basest girl on earth if that were so."

She had grown quite white, and there was a suspicious brightness about her eyes—Roma's eyes that were the home of laughter.

Of course we all declared we didn't mean it, and Sketchley called himself all manner of hard names for having suggested such a thing. All the same we felt that in some subtle way Roma had changed, though we were none of us clever enough to discover how.

And then one day a man of the name of Cavendish, a friend of Owen's, but a stranger to most of us, threw an unwelcome light upon the subject.

"Haven't I heard you chaps rave about old Phillingham's daughter," he said as he pottered round Sketchley's attic.

"Rather," said Jack, "most perfect face you've ever seen."

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Cavendish listened with an amused smile.

"I heard that she was sittting to some of her father's friends, but I was a bit surprised to learn that she was one of Tremaine's models. I was up there the other day," he went on, "and had a little chat with her. She's a charming girl as well as a beauty."

No one spoke, and he glanced from one to the other in a puzzled sort of fashion.

"Why don't one of you paint her portrait for the New?" he asked.

Sketchley turned abruptly from his easel.

"We've all painted Roma so many times that I fancy she's a bit tired of our style. Wants a change."

"Ah," said Cavendish, "well Tremaine is certainly a change. All the same I should try and persuade Miss Roma not to put all her eggs into one basket."

None of us commented on what Cavendish said, but Sketchley voiced the general feeling, as, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, he remarked, later:

"I shall write to Bob to-night. It's time he came back."

Meanwhile Jack Sketchley bestirred himself in an unusual, and mysterious fashion. He took to denying himself to his friends, working like a fiend at all hours until, I grew quite worried with trying to imagine why he did it. At last, however, I arrived at the solution of the mystery.

"I've been doing a lot of work lately," he said, "really good work, not your wretched pot-boilers, and I've received a commission from *The Easel* to illustrate a series of articles on Egyptian art. It appears that Tremaine is a great gun on that sort of thing, and I've a letter of introduction to him. Do you care to come with me to present it."

Needless to say I went, and never was I more supremely conscious of the great gulf that lies between the "elect" of art, who sit in high places, and worship—if at all—luxuriously in her temple, and the sweepers and cleaners thereof, who labouring sorely, reap no reward but love.

We were ushered into a delightfully cool oak-pannelled room, leading into the studio. It was evident that the great R. A. had forgotten that we were waiting, for he continued his conversation with some one we did not see.

Judging by the tones of his voice he was speaking to a woman, doubtless young and pretty, and to whom he seemed to be making love. It was an uncomfortable position for us, and, presently Sketchley rose, and drawing back the curtains, which separated the room we were in from the studio, prepared to enter.

Suddenly he drew back, and after a moment I did the same. Philip Tremaine was standing by the window, holding the hands of a slight young figure in his own. As we looked he deftly slipped his arm about her waist, and drew her to him.

"No, no," she cried faintly protesting. But even as she spoke she yielded, and we could see the hot blood dye her face as he stooped and kissed her on the lips.

"You love me, sweet?"

"Ah, so much," and then she broke from him, and hid her face behind her hands.

"Roma," he whispered, "Roma," and Roma, wilful, head strong Roma, came at his call. A minute later and a sudden influx of visitors—a party of fine ladies—swept into the room, from thence into the studio, and we followed.

Tremaine received us with his usual charm of manner, and was especially gracious to Sketchley in spite of Jack's determined stiffness. As for the women they surrounded him in a moment and compliments, delicate and flattering, sounded on all sides, enough indeed to turn a stronger head than Philip Tremaine's.

All this time Roma stood aloof, waiting as in truth we waited, for him to introduce her to his friends. Some of the women stared at her in a supercilious sort of fashion, others criticised her with a well bred air of insolence. One in a loud tone of voice asked, "If she were a model," and advanced to inspect her as a curiosity.

Roma stood her ground quietly, conversing in an undertone with Sketchley and me, and apparently taking no heed of Tremaine's neglect.

"Are you coming, Roma?" I asked after a while. "Jack and I are going now."

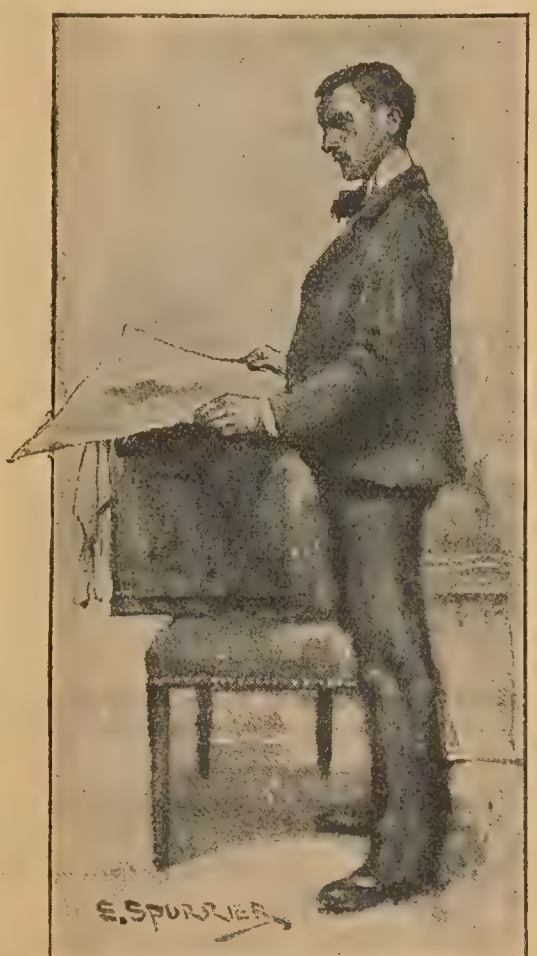
"Yes," she said, "I will come."

She advanced quietly to Tremaine and said something, what, I could not hear. I caught however something of the reply.

"It's not my fault, Roma, indeed I could not help it. If only you were not a model."

It was a very silent walk home, neither of us had the heart to talk to the poor child, and Jack seemed too indignant after she had left to do more than swear fiercely under his breath.

That evening Bob came home and as of yore, most of us turned up to see him. A sudden violent ringing of the bell disturbed us, we glanced at each other.



"Haven't I heard you chaps rave about old Phillingham's daughter?" he said, as he pottered round Sketchley's attic.

"Sounds like Roma," said Masters, and Roma it proved to be.

She went straight up to Bob, her slim figure looking pathetically childish, her big eyes infinitely sad.

"Bob," she said simply, "will you please send me to school, as you once promised? I'm tired and I don't want to be a model any more."

* * * *

It was some three years later when I next saw Roma Phillingham. She had more than fulfilled the promise of her youth, and was the most perfectly beautiful woman I have ever seen. All her waywardness had vanished. In the brilliant woman of the world there was no trace of the charming little Bohemian we had all spoiled and petted.

She made her *début* under the wing of old Lady Scarlett, a distant relative of Bob's, who had taken an immense fancy to his *protégée*. The beautiful Miss Phillingham, her face, her voice, her admirers were the sensation of the hour. And none so persistent, so admiring as the great R. A., Sir Philip—he had lately been created a Baronet—Tremaine. We used to talk over her triumphs, and speculate as to who would be the lucky man. Needless to say Sketchley and I never referred to the scene in the studio, but somehow or other I fancy Bob had an inkling of it and how matters stood in that direction.

One night I dropped in on Bob for a chat, and found him regularly down in the mouth. He was studying a society paper which I remember contained a rumour of Roma's engagement to Sir Philip. He put it down as I entered, but didn't seemingly want to talk, so we smoked in silence.

After a while he remarked casually:

"I see our little girl's going to make a grand match. I hope Tremaine is worthy of her, but I doubt it."

"Most people would consider her very lucky," I said. "I suppose it's certain she's accepted him?"

"Nothing certain in this world, dear boy, except rent day," said a mocking voice.

"Roma," I exclaimed.

She laughed and turned to Bob.

"I've come back again, you see," she said; "airs and graces and all. You won't send me away, will you?"

Bob rose and laid his hand upon the bell.

"I'm going to send for a hansom," he said calmly, "and pack you off at once. Go, will you, and see to it, there's a good fellow."

I went obediently, returning some few minutes later with the intelligence that the cab was at the door. As I entered—the room was in shadow save for the flickering fire light—for the moment I could not discover where Miss Roma was. After a bit my vision, mental as well as physical, grew clearer.

Roma was kneeling by Bob Owen's side, her head upon his shoulder.

"And you really want to know why I refused Sir Philip's offer?" she asked softly. "It's a foolish, and I'm afraid you'll think it a very selfish, reason."

"Well?"

In the dim light she drew nearer.

"I don't want to marry him," she answered, "because if you don't mind I'd rather marry you."

"Roma——"

"Oh, Bob, Bob," she cried, "my darling, let me stay here with you for ever."

He opened his arms and like a tired child she crept into them, laying her head upon his heart. Henceforth her resting place for ever.

JOHN K. PROTHERO.

She made her *debut* under the wing of old Lady Scarlett, a distant relative of Bob's, who had taken an immense fancy to his *protégée*.

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of H. E. Dudeney's popular novel, "Hagar of Homerton," to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source must be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. H. Cawte, of Frimley Road, Camberley. Attempts for this week's prize may deal with any subject, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, January 8th. Post-cards only, please.

Their Proper Place.

A FEW days ago two or three reservists belonging to the Guards (all friends) were about to rejoin their regiment at the depôt, prior to their departure for South Africa.

They arrived at the local station just as the heavily laden train was about to depart.

"Hurry up," roared the guard, in deep stentorian tones, from his van which was next the engine. "Hurry up, you'll have to come in here with me, there's no room anywhere else."

"Never mind about that," replied they altogether "Everything's just right. Here we are altogether, all Guards, all in the *van*, and all at the front. Hurrah!"

A New Metal-Polish.

THE other day a lady discovered her servant-girl trying to clean the fender with a copy of *Short Stories*.

"Bridget!" exclaimed the astonished lady, "whatever are you doing with my paper? You know I only bought it this morning."

"Oh!" replied Bridget, "you said that it always brightened you up, and so I'm trying it on the fender."

He Returned Them All.

THEY had quarrelled, and the high spirited girl said, as she handed him a package: "There, Mr. Ferguson, are the presents you have given me. Now that all is over between us, sir, there should be no reminders of the foolish past."

"You are right, Miss Keezer," he said humbly, "and I suppose I must return the gifts you have presented to me."

"I never gave you anything, sir, that I remember."

"Indeed you did."

"Sir, I——"

"Miss Keezer—Katie!" he exclaimed, with something that sounded like a sob, "I value them beyond everything else in the world! It would break my heart to return them, but there is nothing left for me to do."

"Will you kindly tell me, sir, what you are speaking of?"

"I am speaking, Katie, of the kisses you have given me! They are not mine now. It is my duty to restore them. Forgive me, darling, but I cannot go away without——"

"Oh, George!"

When the clock struck eleven, about three hours later, George was still returning them.

Pricked Their Victim with Pins.

IT was at a tent meeting held some years ago.

During a lengthy address one of the audience had fallen asleep, leaning against the side of the tent.

He suddenly awoke with a yell, and used strong language, to the amazement and horror of the hearers.

It was afterwards found out that some boys, who were outside, seeing the bulky figure pressing against the canvas, had probed it with pins and produced this amusing incident.

A Good Way of Getting Even.

A DUBLIN tramcar the other day was the scene of an incident that fully deserves immortalisation, if only to illustrate the natural keenness of wit and kindness of heart possessed by the lower classes in Ireland.

The car was hailed on O'Connell Bridge by a countrified looking girl, very like a farm servant in search of a city place. She got on to the step and coolly demanded of the conductor:

"Change for half-a-sovereign, please."

The man looked at her open-mouthed, and was preparing to deliver a volley of indignant abuse, when his expression suddenly changed; the innocent confidence of the country girl had evidently given him an idea.

"Who tould ye to ask for change?" he said.

"A man at the crossing," answered the girl. "He told me just to stop the first tramcar I see, and ask for change, and they'd give it to me, aisy."

"Where's your half-sovereign?" demanded the conductor.

She gave it, he counted out the change, handed it to her in silence, and started the tram as she made for the pavement again.

"I'm even with the mane villyun, whoever he was, anyway," commented the conductor, and the passengers looked as if they would have liked to clap.

An Army Contract.

PASSING along Princes Street, Edinburgh, one day, a herculean Scots Grey stopped at the post-office, and called on a street arab to polish his boots. The feet of the dragoon were in proportion to his height, and, looking at the tremendous boots before him, the arab knelt down on the pavement, and shouted out to his chum across the roadway:

"Jamie, come ower an' gie's a hand; I've got an army contract."

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Proofs of Madness.

A Hull lady went to a doctor to consult him as to her husband's sanity.

"What proofs of madness has he given?" asked the physician.

"Last night," she replied, "he ate a pie large enough for four men, then he went to the kitchen and kissed the cook."

"That is nothing, madam," said the doctor. "Had he kissed the pie and eaten the cook, the matter would have been serious."

Why Neighbour Jones Couldn't Gather Them.

In a certain Sunday-school, the teacher was endeavouring to explain that a man could not expect to reap if he never took the trouble to sow.

"But what he does sow he will reap," he continued. "To make matters plainer I will ask you a question. If I planted turnip seed, what do you think I should get?"

"Turnips!" shouted several.

"Right!" said the teacher.

"But it doan't allus come off," put in one precocious youth. "It didn't wi' neighbour Jones."

"Indeed," remarked the teacher.

"Yis," went on the bright scholar, "'e sowed some taters a little while ago, but 'e ain't reaped none."

"Well, perhaps he's gathered them."

"No 'e ain't gathered 'em."

"Well, dug them up, then."

"No, nor dug 'em up naythur."

"Oh, I see," smiled the teacher. "The potatoes are not ready yet. He will gather them by-and-bye."

"No, I doan't think as 'e will," persisted the scholar.

"Why?" asked the puzzled teacher.

"Why, you see," responded the other calmly, "we gathered 'em when he was in town the day before he was going to."

The "Waits" Remuneration.

Last Xmas day the vicar of a certain village near Birmingham received a visit from the village "waits" who provided a rich (?) treat outside the vicarage for about an hour.

On the following morning the leader called to receive the remuneration. He was shown into the vicar's study, and he at once began:

"Sir, I am the leader of those 'waits' who paid you a visit last night."

"I am glad you have called," said the vicar.

"Yes," beamed the other, "we thought you would gladly remunerate us for our performance."

"What!" exclaimed the vicar, "you have come for money! Why I thought you had come to apologise!"

Collapse of musical director.

The Representative of Death.

A Vienna paper relates an amusing incident which happened to a great lady just recovered from a long and severe illness. Seated in her boudoir, she was looking over the cards of condolence that had been left with her.

Among the names of counts, barons, and other aristocratic sympathisers, emblazoned with coronets and coats of arm, she came upon the plain card with the simple inscription of "Herman Berger." In vain the lady asked who Herman Berger was. The servants could not give her any information than that the individual had been a remarkably handsome young man.

The lady's curiosity was excited, and she gave orders to admit the person in case he should call again. The order was punctually obeyed, and on the next day she received a really charming young man, dressed in exquisite style, who evidently felt greatly embarrassed at the honour of a *tête-à-tête* with the still charming, though somewhat faded, beauty.

"I can hardly find words," said the lady with a blush, "to thank you for the sympathy you have manifested for a stranger."

"I beg your pardon, gracious lady," stammered the dandy; "but I am the agent of Messrs. A. and B., the undertakers."

Not a Sack!

At a certain builder's yard in Glasgow, it is the custom to pay the men their money in little bags each week.

One Saturday, the master told Pat, an Irish labourer, when paying him, that he should not require his services any more.

On the following Monday, as the master was going round the yard, he saw Pat at work, as usual.

"Hullo, Pat!" said he; "didn't I give you the sack on Saturday?"

"No, sir," said Pat; "shure it was the same little bag I've always had."

Pat's services were retained.

A Flattering Testimonial.

A very eminent London surgeon, one of the lights of the profession, one day observed a gentleman knocked down by a runaway horse. He went to his aid and found he had broken his leg. It was only a simple fracture, but the man was badly hurt.

The surgeon used his umbrella as a splint, and with his own hands borrowed handkerchiefs, bandaged the limb tightly, put the patient in a cab, and drove to the nearest hospital. There they were received by a young medical student.

"You've bandaged this pretty well," said the youth patronisingly.

"Not at all," said the other.

"I suppose you've been attending some ambulance class. They say a little learning is a dangerous thing, but the little you've learnt you've put to good account. I can't give you your umbrella now, but if you leave your address it shall be sent to your house."

"I had better give you my card," said the eminent surgeon. And he did so.

The Golden Gates.

A Powerful Romance of the City and the Sea.

By Headon Hill.

Just commencing in PEARSON'S WEEKLY. Get a copy and begin it to-day. You'll thank us for reminding you.

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THE REAL STORY ABOUT KETTLESHAM.

When the members of the No. 2 touring company of *The Hidden Hand*—a drama in three acts and several scenes—heard that the agent in advance had been ordered to Kettlesham, and that they were booked to play at the dreary colliery town for a fortnight, they experienced feelings which they were careful not to express.

It had been arranged that they were to proceed to Bray-bridge, but Bray-bridge had been the scene of a mining disaster, which, as it had plunged the whole community into gloom, rendered it, for their purpose, impossible, or at least inadvisable. Kettlesham was the substitute, and Kettlesham excited emotions amongst the histrions that were the reverse of pleasant.

It was not the town so much as the theatre that they objected to. Few people are so superstitious as actors, and there was scarcely one who had played there, who had not, all unknown to the audience, been hampered by a foreboding of disaster that at least on some occasion had been realised. Tales of suicide, of foul play on the stage, of accidents in the wings that baffled explanations, of a hundred-and-one untoward things had centred round the building, and by mere dint of repetition had come to be believed.

No doubt had it been possible to trace these stories to one common source they would have been dispelled. But then as nearly every "pro" had a different tale of disaster, with a different explanation, this was impossible, and the stories grew and grew until at last there was probably not one touring company who did not hold the place in dread. Certainly if that company existed it was not *The Hidden Hand* Company No. 2.

Its members, however, did not express their feelings. On the contrary, they were loud in their scorn of the thing that caused them.

"We shall get to the bottom of those ridiculous yarns poor Grimsby's suicide set afloat even if we do play to empty houses," the heavy man remarked. "Really, it's time such preposterous rot was put on the shelf."

"As you say, dear boy," the light comedian assented, "they're quite rot, of course. But I always understood it was Milly Langdon's extraordinary death that gave Kettlesham its reputation."

A lady member of the troupe interrupted fiercely:

"Milly Langdon's not dead. I met her before we left town. She's quite well, and married, and living in the suburbs."

"It's the same thing," the comedian retorted wholly unabashed, "anyway, she disappeared."

"And," continued his corrector, "I always understood it was Mr. Keighton's collapse there that made peopl think the place funny."

The heavy man and the comedian shrugged their shoulders at this new schism. Both were prepared to confute it on the clearest possible grounds, when the leading lady—a person of great dignity and some importance—imparted a new tone to the discussion.

"In my opinion," she announced angrily, "these stories are very discreditable to the dignity of the profession. I've no patience with anyone who can repeat such rubbish. It's my firm belief that the whole thing has its origin in too much drink," and with this, a hard knock at the heavy man, and her week's salary, she flounced out of the room, plainly discomposed, and plainly angry with the others for making her so.

But, the leading lady's protest notwithstanding, the discussion continued. All the members of the company save two were present, for it was treasury day, and only the leading lady had been paid. As each member had a different explanation, and as they each insisted that theirs was the right one, the debate would have probably been indefinitely prolonged, had not the arrival of the absent member of the troupe, Sidney Transome, ended it.

Transome was a man held in peculiar respect by his brother histrions, more probably because he had that quality so rare among actors—reserve—than from the fact that he was of a higher culture than their own. It was a habit of the company's to refer matters in dispute to Transome's arbitration. Now they sought it eagerly.

His arrival was the signal for an instantaneous rush in his direction, and a universal demand for his decision as to which was "the real story about Kettlesham." But on this occasion his *confreres* were to be disappointed; and for once his reserve was broken down. For no sooner did he hear the name of the town they were to play at, than his face changed—changed so suddenly, and indeed so awfully, that the men about him were silent. For a moment he stood with his hand to his head, the next he turned sharply on his heel, and without a word walked out.

Then *The Hidden Hand* company No. 2 drew their salaries, this time in silence. Transome's face had shown them what they all felt—dread.

* * * * *

Whatever was the cause of Transome's inexplicable conduct, which the leading lady was understood to have referred to in tones of severe censure, he played his

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part the first night at Kettlesham with a *verve* and force that captured the audience and astonished his brother actors. As a rule, the icy restraint that marked him out in everyday life hung on him even on the boards, and cramped his powers. Now he had flung it aside, and for once did himself justice.

And this perhaps was just as well. For the actors, men and women, were in a state of hysterical nervousness and boastful self-assertiveness that rendered their performances inept. The contagion of panic had seized them the moment they had seen that Transome felt afraid, and panic held their souls firmly now.

All except one—that was little Alice Etheridge, or if she felt afraid she disguised it cleverly. She alone played up to Transome's lead, and betrayed not the least sign of nervousness. But then as she had but a small part, and was not generally considered of any importance, her example did not inspire imitation.

Still, except for bad acting, things went without a hitch, and the performance over, the histrions' spirits recovered wonderfully. At the bar matters were discussed excitedly, but this time reassuringly. The relief from the tension through which all had passed found expression in loud talk and strong assertions, the heavy man being particularly in evidence.

"I always said," he remarked, "that the thing was pure nonsense, and ought not to be discussed. Only if you remember Transome insisted on doing so. Transome, I consider, is wholly responsible for the needless anxiety which some of our ladies have been suffering to-night."

And Transome being absent, this was the general verdict.

"But," said one of the ladies in question, speaking in a whisper that was still reminiscent of awe, "they say it always happens on the third night, don't they?"

The company became instantly indignant. To tell the truth the reminder that there were eleven other evenings of anxiety to go through was the pin-prick to their bladder of joy. And they were all correspondingly angry with the person who had given it.

What was it that happened on the third night, they asked, and if the lady did not know, why had she spoken? In fact, the protests her innocent remark aroused were so violent as to cause her to tremble. Finally, it ended in the formation by the heavy man and the leading lady of a league—which was instantly joined by everyone present, "For the Suppression of Superstition in the Profession," and by the retirement of the timid lady in a flood of tears and an opera cloak.

Despite this courageous conduct, however, the members of the company felt by no means comfortable. And, indeed, they had some excuse for the fact that they looked forward to each performance with secret dread. To act a part, even for the hundredth time, and to act it well, requires a large amount of self-control, and nervous energy under any conditions: to act with the momentary expectation of something dreadful happening, of the silence of the audience being broken by a shriek, or of hearing a cry from the wings, is a trying experience indeed. To do so for several nights in succession is even more so. And the result was that the nerves of the company were worn to fiddle strings.

The leading lady became "indisposed" and her part—that of the heroine—had to be played by Alice Etheridge, while the heavy man fell back on alcoholic support to a greater extent than before. Even the stage-manager became affected, and on several occasions deserted his post, with the result that supers walked on and off at wrong moments.

And yet the thing, the calamity, the disaster did not take place, and as night after night went by even the fear-stricken actors began to think that, as they had loudly asserted, "nothing unusual would happen."

But happen it did though not the third, or the fifth, but on the last night of the run.

It was a woman who caused it, a woman who had been introduced behind the scenes that very night. She was known to some of the company as a girl who had been on the stage and had left it "for something better," as she said—(the "something" being marriage). That evening two of her old comrades had met her in the town, and brought her to the theatre, and during the last act she had stood in the wings watching Transome's performance.

Now, behind the scenes is, while the play proceeds, a busy place, and the members of the company were far too much occupied with their own affairs to notice that their visitor had consumed during the evening more liquid refreshment than was good for her, or that towards the end of the piece she began to display marked excitement.

They had in fact forgotten her when the catastrophe happened.

It was at the end of the final scene—the scene in which the hero, parted from the heroine by a series of impossible events claims her for his own, and it was while Transome was delivering his last speech that it happened.

"A man's wife," he said, "should be the finer spirit of his life, through which the grosser filters only to be purified anew. She should never—she can never—leave him. In all he does, her spirit should abide with him—in his struggles that he may win worthily, in his hopes that he may plan nobly, in his defeats that they may teach him. And the spirit that lifts should guide him also. She should be a shield to cover him, a star to guide him, and a fire in his heart to urge him on, and that woman—my wife——"

Scarcely had he said the words than the audience saw him drop the heroine's hands sharply, and following his eyes, saw that another figure had come on the scene—the figure of a woman, who swayed unsteadily in her walk, but yet came towards Transome with set purpose on her face, a woman whose dress seemed gaudy even on the stage—gaudy yet soiled.

Then they saw Transome cower, and hang his head like a man detected in a mean offence. Still the woman advanced.

All this they saw with Transome's last words "That woman—my wife," ringing in their hearts, and then suddenly the man changed and faced them boldly, a passion seemed to shake his frame. "My wife," he shouted, "My wife," and then, pointing at the woman: "That is my wife," he said.

Somehow it was the woman who cowered then, but as the curtain came down on her, the fainting heroine, and the hero of the story, the audience were silent. One does not cheer reality.

* * * * *

They have added many to the stories about Kettlesham since then, but the true one is not of the number.

Transome is a big actor now and his shyness hampers him no more. They say it left him for ever the night he told his secret to the world.

CHAS. S. JONES.

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The Angel of the Revolution

By George Griffith

CHAPTER LIII.

In Old Aboukir's Bay.

Five days later was fought a second battle of the Nile, a battle compared with which the former conflict, momentous as it had been, would have seemed but child's play. On the one side Admiral Beresford, in command of the Mediterranean squadron, had collected every available ship and torpedo boat to do battle for the defence of the all-important Suez Canal, and opposed to him was an immense armament formed by the junction of the Russian Black Sea squadron with the Franco-Italian fleet, or rather those portions of it which had survived the attacks or eluded the vigilance of the British admiral.

The battle, fought almost on the ancient battle-ground of Nelson and Collingwood, was incomparably the greatest sea-fight in the history of war.

The fleet under Admiral Beresford's command consisted of fifty-five battleships of the first and second class, forty-six armoured and seventy-two unarmoured cruisers, fifty-four gunboats, and two hundred and seventy torpedo boats, while the allied fleets of the League mustered between them forty-six battleships, seventy-five armoured and sixty-three unarmoured cruisers, forty gunboats, and two hundred and fifty torpedo boats.

The battle began soon after sundown on the 24th of August, and raged continuously for over sixty hours. The whole issue of the fight was the question of the command of the Mediterranean and the British line of communication with India and the East *vid* the Suez Canal.

The prize was well worthy of the tremendous struggle that the two contending forces waged for it, and from the two Admirals in command to the boys employed on the most insignificant duties about the ships, every one of the combatants seemed equally impressed with the magnitude of the momentous issues at stake.

To the League victory meant a deadly blow inflicted upon the only enemy now seriously to be reckoned with. It meant the severing of the British empire into two portions and the cutting of the one remaining channel of supply upon which the heart of the Empire now depended for its nutrition. To destroy Admiral Beresford's fleet would be to achieve as great a triumph on the sea as the armies of the League had achieved on land by the taking of Berlin, Vienna, and Constantinople. On the other hand the defeat of the Franco-Italian fleets meant complete command of the Mediterranean and the keeping open of the Suez Canal, the maintenance of communication with India and Australia by the shortest route, and what was by no means the least important consideration, the vindication of British prestige in Egypt, the Soudan, and India. It was with these enormous gains and losses before their eyes that the two forces engaged and fought as perhaps men had never fought with each other in the world before.

Everything that science and experience could suggest was done by the leaders of both sides. Human life was counted as nothing in the balance, and deeds of the most reckless heroism were performed in countless instances as the mighty struggle progressed.

With such inflexible determination was the battle waged on either side, and so appalling had been the destruction accomplished by the weapons brought into play, that by sunrise on the morning of the 27th, more than half the opposing fleets had been destroyed, and of the remainder the majority were so crippled that a continuance of the fight had become a matter of physical impossibility.

What advantage remained appeared to be on the side of the remnants of the Franco-Italian fleet, but this was speedily negatived an hour after sunrise by the appearance of a fresh British squadron consisting of five battleships, fifteen cruisers, and a large flotilla of gunboats and torpedo boats which had passed through the canal during the night from Aden and Suakim and appeared on the scene just in time to turn the tide of battle, decisively in favour of the British Admiral.

As soon as this new force got into action it went to work with terrible effectiveness, and in three hours there was not a single vessel that was still flying the French or Italian flag. The victory had it is true been bought at a tremendous price, but it was complete and decisive, and at the moment that the last of the ships of the League struck her flag, Admiral Beresford stood in the same glorious position as Sir George Rodney had done a hundred and twenty-two years before, when he saved the British Empire in the ever-memorable victory of the 12th of April, 1782.

The triumph in the Mediterranean was, however, only a set-off to a disaster which had occurred more than five weeks previously in the Atlantic. The Russian fleet, which had broken the blockade of the Sound, with the assistance of the *Lucifer*, had, after coaling at Aberdeen, made its way into the Atlantic, and there, in conjunction with the Franco-Italian fleets, operating along the Atlantic steamer route, had, after a series of desperate engagements, succeeded in breaking up the line of British communication with America and Canada.

This result had been achieved mainly in consequence of the contrast between the necessary methods of attack and defence. On the one hand, Britain had been compelled to maintain an extended line of ocean defence more than three thousand miles in length, and her ships had further been hampered by the absolute necessity of attending first to the protection of the Atlantic liners, and secondly to warding off isolated attacks which were directed upon different parts of the line by squadrons which could not be attacked in turn without breaking the line of convoy which it was all essential to preserve intact.

For two or three weeks there had been a series of running fights, but at length the ocean chain had broken under the

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perpetual strain, and a repulse inflicted on the Irish squadron by a superior force of French, Italian, and Spanish warships had settled the question of the command of the Atlantic in favour of the League. The immediate result of this was that food supplies from the West practically stopped.

Now and then a fleet Atlantic greyhound ran the blockade and brought her priceless cargo into a British port, but as the weeks went by these occurrences became fewer and further between, till the time news was received in London of the investment of the fortresses of the Quadrilateral by the innumerable hosts of the League, brought together by the junction of the French and Russian armies of the North and the conquerors of Vienna and Constantinople, who had returned on their tracks after garrisoning their conquests in the East.

Food in Britain, already at war prices, now began to rise still further, and soon touched famine prices. Wheat, which in the last decade of the nineteenth century had averaged about £9 a ton, rose to over £31 a ton, its price two years before the Battle of Waterloo. Other imported food-stuffs, of course, rose in proportion with the staple commodity, and the people of Britain saw, at first dimly, then more and more clearly, the real issue that had been involved in the depopulation of the rural districts to swell the populations of the towns, and the consequent lapse of enormous areas of land either into pasturage or unused wilderness.

In other words, Britain began to see approaching her doors an enemy before whose assault all human strength is impotent, and all valour unavailing. Like Imperial Rome, she had depended for her food supply on external sources, and now these sources were one by one being cut off.

The loss of the command of the Atlantic, the breaking of the Baltic blockade, and the consequent closing of all the continental ports save Hamburg, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Antwerp, had left her entirely dependent upon her own miserably insufficient internal resources and the Mediterranean route to India and the East.

More than this, too, only Hamburg, Antwerp, and the forces of the Quadrilateral, now stood between her and actual invasion, that supreme calamity which, until the raid upon Aberdeen, had been for centuries believed to be impossible.

Once let the League triumph in the Netherlands, as it had done in Central and South-Eastern Europe, and its legions would descend like an avalanche upon the shores of England, and the Lion of the Seas would find himself driven to bay in the stronghold which he had held inviolate for nearly a thousand years.

CHAPTER LIV.

From Chaos to Arcadie.

During the three months of incessant strife and carnage which deluged the plains and valleys of Europe with blood after the fall of Berlin the Terrorists took no part whatever in the war.

At long intervals an air-ship was seen from the earth flyng at full speed through the upper regions of the atmosphere, now over Europe, now over America, and now over Australia or the Cape of Good Hope, but if they held any communication with the earth they did so secretly, and only paid the briefest of visits, the objects of which could but be guessed at.

When one was sighted the fact was mentioned in the newspapers, and vague speculations were indulged it, but there was soon little room left for these in the public attention, especially in Britain, for as the news of disaster after disaster came pouring in, and the hosts of the League drew nearer and nearer to the western shores of Europe all eyes were turned more and more anxiously across "the silver streak" which now alone separated the peaceful hills and valleys of England and Scotland from the destroying warstorm which had so swiftly desolated the fields of Europe, and all hearts were heavy with apprehension of coming sorrows.

The rapidity of their movements had naturally led to the supposition that several of the air-ships had taken the air for some unknown purpose, but in reality there were only two of them afloat during nearly the whole of the three months.

Of these, one was the *Orion*, on board of which Tremayne was visiting the various centres of the Brotherhood throughout the English-speaking world, making everything ready for the carrying out at the proper time of the great project to which he had devoted himself since the memorable night at Alanmere when he had seen the vision of the world's Armageddon. The other was under the command of Michael Roburoff, who was busy in America and Canada perfecting the preparations for checkmating the designs of the American Ring which were described in a former chapter.

The remainder of the members of the Inner Circle and those of the Outer Circle, living in Aeria, were quietly pursuing the most peaceful avocations, building houses and water-mills, clearing fields and laying out gardens, fishing in the lake and streams, and hunting in the forests as though they had never heard of the horrors of war and had no part or share in the Titanic strife whose final issue they would so soon have to go forth and decide.

One of the hardest workers in the colony was the Admiral of the aerial fleet. Morning after morning he shut himself up in his laboratory for three or four hours experimenting with explosives of various kinds, and especially on a new form of fire-shell which he had invented, and which he was now busy perfecting in preparation for the next, and as he hoped, final conflict that he would have to wage with the forces of despotism and barbarism.

The afternoons he spent supervising the erection of the mills, and the construction of new machinery, and in exploring the mountain sides in search of mineral wealth of which he was delighted to find abundant promise that was afterwards realised beyond his expectations.

On these exploring expeditions he was frequently accompanied by Natasha and Radna and her husband. Sometimes Arnold would be enticed away from his chemicals, and his designs upon the lives of his enemies, and after breakfasting soon after sunrise would go off for a long day's ramble to some unknown part of their wonderful domain, in which, like children in a fairy-land, they were always discovering some new wonders and beauties. And, indeed, no children could have been happier or freer from care than they were during this delightful interval in the tragedy in which they were so soon to play such conspicuous parts.

The two wedded lovers, with the dark past put far behind them for ever, found perfect happiness in each other's society, and so, it is almost needless to add, left Arnold and Natasha pretty much to their own devices. Indeed, Natasha had more than once declared that she would have to get the Princess to join the party, as Radna had proved herself a helpless failure as a chaperone.

Everyone in the valley by this time looked upon Arnold and Natasha as lovers, though their rank in the Brotherhood was so high that no one ventured to speak of them as betrothed save by implication. How Natas regarded them was known only to himself. He, of course, saw their intimacy, and since he said nothing he doubtless looked upon it with approval, but whether he regarded it as an intimacy of friends or of lovers remained a mystery even to Natasha herself, for he never by any chance made an allusion to it.

As for Arnold he had scrupulously observed the compact tacitly made between them on the first and only occasion that he had ever spoken words of love to her. They were the best of friends, the closest companions, and their intercourse with each other was absolutely frank and unrestrained, just as it would have been between two close friends of the same sex; but they understood each other perfectly, and by no

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word or deed did either cross the line that divides friendship from love.

She trusted him absolutely in all things, and he took this trust as a sacred pledge between them that until his part of their compact had been performed love was a forbidden subject not even to be approached.

So perfectly did Natasha play her part that though he spent hours and hours alone with her on their exploring expeditions, and in rowing and sailing on the lake, and though he passed many another hour in solitude weighing her every word and action, he was utterly unable to truthfully congratulate himself on having made the slightest progress towards gaining that love without which, even if he held her to the compact in the day of victory, victory itself would be robbed of its crowning glory and dearest prize.

To a weaker man it would have been an impossible situation, the constant and familiar companionship with a girl whose wonderful beauty dazzled his eyes and fired his blood as he looked upon it, and whose winning charm of manner and grace of speech and action seemed to glorify her beauty until she seemed a being almost beyond the reach of merely human love—rather one of those daughters of men whom the sons of God looked upon in the early days of the world, and found so fair that they forsook Heaven itself to woo them.

Trained and disciplined as he had been in the sternest of all schools, and strengthened as he was by the knowledge of the compact that existed between them, there were moments when his self-control was very sorely tried, moments when her hand would be clasped in his, or rested on his shoulder as he helped her across a stream or down some steep hillside, or when in the midst of some animated discussion she would stop short and face him and suddenly confound his logic with a flash from her eyes and a smile on her lips that literally forced him to put forth a muscular effort to prevent himself from catching her in his arms and risking everything for just one kiss, one taste of the forbidden fruit within his reach, and yet parted from him by a sea of blood and flame that still lay between the world and that empire of peace which he promised to win for her sweet sake.

Once and once only she had tried him almost too far. They had been discussing the possibility of ruling the world without the ultimate appeal to force when the nations, weary at length of war, should have consented to disarm, and she, carried away by her own eloquent pleading for the ultimate triumph of peace and goodwill on earth, had laid her hand upon his arm, and was looking up at him with her lovely face aglow with the sweetest expression even he had ever seen upon it.

Their eyes met, and there was a sudden silence between them. The eloquent words died upon her lips and a deep flush rose to her cheeks, and then faded instantly away, leaving her pale and with a look almost of terror in her eyes. He took a quick step backwards, and, turning away as though he feared to look any longer upon her beauty, said in a low tone that trembled with the strength of his repressed passion:

"Natasha, for God's sake remember that I am only made of flesh and blood!"

In a moment she was by his side again, this time with her eyes downcast and her proud little head bent as though in acknowledgment of his reproof. Then she looked up again, and held out her hand and said:

"Forgive me; I have done wrong! Let us be friends again!"

There was a gentle emphasis on the word "friends" that was irresistible. He took her hand in silence, and after a pressure that was almost imperceptibly returned, let it go again, and they walked on together; but there was very little more said between them till they returned to the settlement.

This had happened one afternoon towards the middle of September, and two days later their delightful companionship came suddenly to an end, and the bond that existed between them was severed in a moment without warning, as a nerve thrilling with pleasure might be cut by an unexpected blow with a knife.

On the 16th of September the *Orion* returned from Australia. She touched the earth shortly after midday, and before sunset the *Azrael*, the vessel in which Michael Roburoff had gone to America, also returned, but without her commander. Her lieutenant, however, brought a despatch from him, which he delivered at once to Natas, who, immediately on reading it, sent for Tremayne.

It evidently contained matters of great importance, for they remained alone together discussing it for over an hour. At the end of that time Tremayne left the Master's house and went to look for Arnold. He found him just helping Natasha out of a skiff at a little landing-stage that had been built out into the lake for boating purposes. As soon as greetings had been exchanged, he said:

"Natasha, I have just left your father. He asked me, if I saw you, to tell you that he wishes to speak to you at once."

"Certainly," said Natasha. "I hope you have not brought bad news home from your travels. You are looking very serious about something," and without waiting for an answer, she was gone to obey her father's summons.

As soon as she was out of earshot Tremayne put his arm through Arnold's, and drawing him away towards a secluded portion of the shore of the lake, said:

"Arnold, old man, I have some very serious news for you. You must prepare yourself for the severest strain that, I believe, could be put on your loyalty and your honour."

"What is it? For Heaven's sake don't tell me that it has to do with Natasha!" exclaimed Arnold, stopping short and facing round, white to the lips with the sudden fear that possessed him. "You know——"

"Yes, I know everything," replied Tremayne, speaking almost as gently as a woman would have done, "and I am sorry to say that it has to do with her. I know what your hopes have been with regard to her, and no man on earth could have wished to see those hopes fulfilled more earnestly than I have done, but——"

"What do you mean, Tremayne? Speak out, and let me know the worst. If you tell me that I am to give her up, I tell you that I am——"

"'That I am an English gentleman, and that I will break my heart rather than my oath'—that is what you will tell me when I tell you that you must not only give up your hopes of winning Natasha, but that it is the Master's orders that you shall have the *Ithuriel* ready to sail at midnight to take her to America to Michael Roburoff, who has written to Natas to ask her for his wife."

Arnold heard him out in dazed stupified silence. It seemed too monstrous, too horrible to be true. The sudden blow had stunned him. He tried to speak, but the words would not come. Tremayne, still standing with his arm through his, felt his whole body trembling, as though stricken with some sudden palsy. He led him on again, saying in a sterner tone than before:

"Come, come! Play the man, and remember that the work nearest to your hand is war, and not love. Remember the tremendous issues that are gathering to their fulfilment, and the part that you have to play in working them out. This is not a question of the happiness or the hopes of one man or woman, but of millions, of the whole human race. You, and you alone, hold in your hands the power to make the defeat of the League certain."

"And I will use it, have no fear of that!" replied Arnold, stopping again and passing his hand over his eyes like a man waking from an evil dream. "What I have sworn to do I will do; I am not going back from my oath. I will obey to the end, for she will do the same, and what would she think of me if I failed! Leave me alone for a bit now.

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old man. I must fight this thing out with myself, but the *Ithuriel* shall be ready to start at twelve."

Tremayne saw that he was himself again, and that it was better that he should do as he said, so with a word of farewell he turned away and left him alone with his thoughts. Half way back to the settlement he met Natasha coming down towards the lake. She was deadly pale, but she walked with a firm step, and carried her head as proudly erect as ever. As they met she stopped him and said:

"Where is he?"

Tremayne's first thought was to try and persuade her to go back and leave Arnold to himself, but a look at Natasha's white set face and shining eyes warned him that she was not in a mood to take advice, and so he told her, and without another word she went on swiftly down the path that led to the lake.

CHAPTER LV.

Love and Duty.

The brief twilight of the tropics had passed before Arnold reached a grove of palms on the western shore of the lake towards which he had bent his steps when he left Tremayne. He walked with loose, aimless strides, now quickly and now slowly, and now stopping to watch the brightening moon shining upon the water.

He caught himself thinking what a lovely night it would be to take Natasha for a row, and then his mind sprang back with a jerk to the remembrance of the horrible journey that he was to begin at midnight—to take Natasha to another man, and leave her with him as his wife.

No, it could not be true. It was impossible that he should have fought and triumphed as he had done, and all for this. To give up the one woman he had ever loved in all his life, the woman he had snatched from slavery and degredation when not another man on earth could have done it.

What had this Roburoff done that she should be given to him for the mere asking? Why had he not come in person like a man to woo and win her if he could, and then he would have stood aside and bowed to her choice. But this curt order to take her away to him as though she were some piece of merchandise—no, if such things were possible better that he had never——

"Richard!"

He felt a light touch on his arm, and turned round sharply. Natasha was standing beside him. He had been so engrossed by his dark thoughts that he had not heard her light step on the soft sward, and now he seemed to see her white face and great shining eyes looking up at him in the moonlight as though there was some mist floating between him and her. Suddenly the mist seemed to vanish. He saw tears under the long, dark lashes, and the sweet red lips parted in a faint smile.

Lose her he might to-morrow, but for this one moment she was his and no other man's, let those who would say nay. That instant she was clasped helpless and unresisting in his arms, and her lips were giving his back kiss for kiss. Wreck and chaos might come now for all he cared. She loved him and had given herself to him, if only for that one hour.

After that he could plunge into the battle again, and slay and spare not—yes, and he would slay without mercy. He would hurl his lightnings from the skies, and where they struck there should be death. If not love and life then hate and death—it was not his choice. Let those who had chosen see to that; but for the present love and life were his, why should he not live. Then the mad, sweet delirium passed, and saner thoughts came. He released her suddenly, almost brusquely, and said with a harsh ring in his voice:

"Why did you come? Have you forgotten what so nearly happened the day before yesterday?"

"No, I have not forgotten it. I have remembered it, and that is why I came to tell you—what you know by this time."

Her face was rosy enough now, and she looked him straight in the eyes as she spoke, proud to confess the mastery that he had won.

"Now listen," she went on, speaking in a low, quick, passionate tone. "The will of the Master must be done. There is no appeal from that either for you or me. He can dispose of me as he chooses, and I shall obey, as I warned you I should when you first told me that you should win me if you could.

"Well, you have won me so far as I can be won. I love you, and I have come to tell you so before the shadow falls between us. And I have come to tell you that what you have won shall belong to no one else. I will obey my father to the letter, but the spirit is my affair. Now kiss me again, dear, and say good-bye. We have had our glimpse of Heaven, and this is not the only life."

For one more brief moment she surrendered herself to him again. Their lips met and parted, and in an instant she had slipped out of his arms and was gone, leaving him dazed with her beauty and her winsomeness.

An hour later he walked back to the settlement looking five years older than he had done a couple of hours before, but with his nerves steady and with the light of a solemn resolve burning in his eyes. He went straight to the *Ithuriel*, and made a minute personal inspection of the whole vessel, inside and out. He saw that every cylinder was charged, and that there was an ample supply of spare ones and ammunition on board, including a number of his new fire-shells. Then he went to Lieutenant Marston's quarters, and told him to have the crew in their places by half-past eleven, and this done, he paid a visit to the Master to report all ready.

Natas received him as usual, just as though nothing out of the common had happened, and if he noticed the change that had come over him, he made no sign that he did so. When Arnold had made his report, he merely said:

"Very good. You will start at twelve. The Chief has told you the nature and purpose of the voyage you are about to make, I presume?"

He bowed a silent affirmative, and Natas went on:

"The Chief and Anna Ornovski will go with you as witnesses for Michael Roburoff and Natasha, and the Chief will be provided with my sealed orders for your guidance in the immediate future. The rendezvous is a house on one of the spurs of the Alleghany Mountains. What time will it take to reach there?"

"The distance is about seven thousand miles. That will be from thirty to thirty-five hours' flight according to the wind. With a fair wind we shall reach the Alleghanies a little before sunrise on the 18th."

"Then to make sure of that, if possible, you had better start an hour earlier. Natasha is making her preparations, and will be on board at eleven."

"Very well; I will be ready to start then," replied Arnold, speaking as calmly and formally as Natas had done. Then he saluted and walked out.

When he got into the open air he drew a deep breath. His teeth came together with a sharp snap, and his hands clenched. So it was true, then, this horrible thing, this sacrilege, this ruin, that had fallen upon his life and hers. Natas had spoken of giving her to this man as quietly as though it had been the most natural proceeding possible, an understood arrangement about which there could be no question. Well, he had sworn and he would obey, but there would be a heavy price to pay for his obedience.

He did not see Natasha again that night. When the *Ithuriel* rose into the air she was in her cabin with the Princess, and did not appear during the voyage save at meals, when all the others were present, and then she joined in the conversation with a composure which showed that, externally at least, she had quite regained her habitual self-control.

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Arnold spent the greater part of the voyage in the deck-saloon with Tremayne, talking over the events of the war, and arranging plans of future action. By mutual consent the object of their present voyage was not mentioned. As Arnold was more than two months and a half behind the news, he found not a little relief in hearing from Tremayne of all that had taken place since the recapture of the *Lucifer*. With a portion of this the reader has already been made acquainted, and the rest may be given here in the Chief's own words as he told it to Arnold in the deck-saloon after breakfast on the morning of the 17th.

"You know, of course, of that mysterious movement which has been taking place for many months past now all over the East. Well, as the Americans say, the fall of Constantinople brought that to a head, and with almost miraculous rapidity too. By some means or other the Sultan, Mohammed Reshad, as fierce an old fire-eater as ever smelt powder, managed to escape from the city before the French and Russians got in.

"He got on board one of the Turkish ships that went to the Nile with Beresford, in disguise, and was landed in Egypt with the Turkish troops before the battle, without anyone knowing who he was, and he went straight to Cairo. About a week after he got there, the great mosque was crammed to suffocation by a vast crowd of Turks and Arabs. When prayers were over who should enter the pulpit but Sultan Mohammed, arrayed in his sacerdotal robes as the Sheik-ul-Islam, or Commander of the Faithful. Two of the muftis unfolded the Black Banner of the Prophet behind him, and then he began to preach the Holy War.

"I needn't tell you what inflammable stuff these Moslems are made of when it is a matter of religion. The fall of Constantinople had roused them almost to madness, and a week after that speech the whole Moslem world was in a blaze. You know how miraculously news travels among Orientals and Arabs. The telegraph had something to do with it, of course, but by whatever means it was accomplished, every Moslem capable of pulling a trigger was up in arms, from Morocco to the Ganges, in less than ten days after the Tecbir sounded in the streets of Cairo.

"Then came a series of wholesale butcheries. I believe every male Christian in Northern Africa was slaughtered within a week. The Moors and Arabs settled what French garrisons had been left in Algiers, the Turks turned on the British in Egypt, outnumbering them, as they did, a good hundred to one, and killed them to a man. By this time the flame had spread to India. Nearly all the British troops had been withdrawn as soon as it was clearly seen that Russia would have to be fought, not on Indian but on British soil, but what were left have never been heard of since.

"That, for the present at any rate, has been the end of British rule in India. What happened after that, or what is happening now, it is impossible to say with any degree of precision. Communications between East and West have been completely stopped for the last three weeks or so. No ships have come through the Suez Canal, and as every available vessel in the Mediterranean Squadron, or rather what was left of it after the big battle in the Bay of Aboukir, has been ordered to Gibraltar, so as to be handy for home defence if needed, nothing is known beyond a rumour that the Turks have blown up several vessels in the Canal and completely blocked it. If there are any garrisons left at Suez Suakim, or Aden, they are completely surrounded, and, a's all the telegraph wires and cables have been cut, there is very little probability of any news reaching them.

"Before I left Australia the other day, however, I heard news which, if it is true, as it probably is, means nothing more nor less than a recurrence of what hap pened in the days of Ghenghis Khan, when the Tartars and Mongols swept Asia from east to west as clean as a chess-board.

"The news was brought by a tea-ship from Shanghai to Melbourne. There was not much of it because she had left

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300	Cash Prizes of £1 each	300 0 0
700	Gents' Umbrellas, value 15/- each	525 0 0
700	Ladies' Umbrellas, value 15/- each	525 0 0
300	Silver-plated Cruets, value 10/- each	150 0 0
500	Ladies' Gun-metal Watches, value 10/- each	250 0 0
500	Gents' Gun-metal Watches, value 10/- each	250 0 0
300	Ladies' Umbrellas, value 7/6 each	112 10 0
500	Cash Prizes of 5/- each	125 0 0
500	Boxes of Games (comprising 8 games, value 5/- each)	125 0 0
649	Ladies' Leather Handbags, value 4/- each	129 16 0
4,500	Pictures of the famous "Charge of the Light Brigade," in gilt frame, value 4/- each	900 0 0
10,000		£5,667 6 0

NOTE.—We have had Five Prize Competitions, and in three of them everybody secured a prize; therefore, do not be afraid to send in your wrappers, however small your collection.

CONDITIONS OF COMPETITION.

Every Bar of Watson's Matchless Cleanser is enclosed in a Wrapper, with signature up the centre of same. Save the WHOLE Wrapper (tops of Wrappers will be disqualified), and send, postage or carriage paid, to Joseph Watson & Sons Limited, Whitehall Soap Works, Leeds, not later than MARCH 31ST, 1900. If any parcel arrives, postage or carriage not being fully paid, such parcel will be refused. Be careful to see that the postage is paid. The prizes will be awarded in the above order to the senders of the highest numbers of Wrappers. Each parcel sent in must contain the full name and address of sender, and number of Wrappers sent in must be marked on the same paper. On outside of parcel write legibly "Prize Competition." Full result of Competition will be enclosed with each prize. Every wrapper must have first contained soap. No employees of Joseph Watson & Sons Limited will be eligible. All prizes will be dispatched about the 20th day of the month following the Competition.

WATSON'S MATCHLESS CLEANSER
Is full-weight 1-lb. Tablets. Sold by all Grocers, Oilmen, &c., throughout United Kingdom

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in a hurry, but what there was was terribly to the point. All the millions of China are on the war-path; the Manchu dynasty has been overthrown, and the supreme power is in the hands of a Buddhist priest, who claims to be a re-incarnation of Buddha, and who is worshipped almost as a god by every Buddhist throughout the East.

"Japan, too, has suddenly cast off her new Christianity and European civilisation, torn up her ready-made constitution, and followed the priests of her old religion to the feet of the new Buddha. As China and Japan have both powerful fleets and almost innumerable armies, I expect the next definite news we shall get will be of a descent on India, where the Moslems will be cutting Buddhist throats wholesale.

"There will be some tremendous fighting between them and the Buddhists, and after that probably a descent on Eastern Europe by the victors. So far as European civilisation is concerned that will be the beginning of chaos, unless the Anglo-Saxon race rises to the occasion and stands between the world and another Oriental conquest."

"I don't think there is very much fear of that," said Arnold, as Tremayne stopped speaking. "I believe there is plenty of grit left in the Anglo-Saxon yet, and when he once clearly sees that either he or the Mongol or Moslem, as the case may be, has got to possess the earth, he will fight as long as he can put an army in the field.

"Added to that I believe the Moslems will render a pretty good account of the Chinese and Japs before they get very far West. There may not be so many of them, but they're soldiers to a man, and I don't expect we shall have many of the others to reckon with by the time they have done with them. Can you tell me now what the prospects of carrying out this great Federation scheme of yours are?"

"Of course, I can only give you a rough estimate, but I think I can say that, thanks to the marvellous organisation of the Brotherhood, which, of course, has been placed entirely at my disposal by Natas, the success of the scheme is practically assured so far as the vast majority of the industrial classes is concerned, and I needn't say that if we have them the so-called upper and middle classes must either join us or be crushed.

"The fact is that those who turn the world's raw material into available wealth are heartily sick of being manipulated by the capitalists. Without the war, and without the threatened extinction of Britain as a Power, they might not have risen for another hundred years, if they had ever risen at all; but now, you see, it is a question not only of an economic revolt, but also of breaking the power of the League or becoming subject to it.

"As for America, the capitalist and his very humble servant, the professional politician, have between them reduced things to such a state of political and economic rottenness that the moment we proclaim a general Federation of the Anglo-Saxon peoples and declare war on the World, the League, and the Almighty Dollar, industrial America will rise to a man, and that colossal sham, the United States Government, will collapse like a broken bubble."

About eleven, on the night of the 17th, Tremayne went to his cabin, and Arnold told the man on the look-out to go below until he was called. Then he took his place, and remained alone with his thoughts as the *Ithuriel* sped on her way a thousand feet above the deserted waters of the Atlantic, until the dark mass of the American Continent loomed up in front of him to the westward.

As soon as he sighted land he went aft to the wheel-house, and slightly inclined the air-planes, causing the *Ithuriel* to soar upwards until the barometer marked a height of six thousand feet. At this elevation he passed over the mouth of the Chesapeake and across Virginia, and a little more than an hour before sunrise the *Ithuriel* sank to the earth on one of the spurs of the Alleghanies, in sight of a lonely weather-board house, in one of the windows of which three lights were burning in the form of a triangle.

(To be continued.)

A WORD TO HUSBANDS.

ARE YOU BOILED— OR ROASTED?

That is the only way to make some men go down—cook them! But then there's a knack in cooking, to have it done just right. There is a splendid little book called

"HOW TO COOK HUSBANDS,"

By Elizabeth Strong Worthington.

It should be read by everyone. You will be amused, entertained. There are charming pictures in it by Lawson Wood. Prettily bound in cloth. On sale everywhere 1s., or we will send it by post on receipt of 1s. 2d.

C. Arthur Pearson Ltd.,
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Pictures of Travel, Sport and Adventure.

By GEORGE LACY ("The Old Pioneer"), Author of "Liberty and Law." "Pioneer Hunters, Traders and Explorers of South Africa," etc. Demy 8vo, cloth, with about fifty illustrations, price 15s.

All eyes are turned at the present moment to South Africa. In Mr. Lacy's book you will find a chapter on "Hunting in the Amaswazi and Gaza Countries," "An Account of Campaigning in the Basuto Country," "Sport and Adventure in Natal," "Christmas Days in South Africa," "Trade and Sport in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal," "Visits to the Diamond Fields," etc., etc.

C. ARTHUR PEARSON Ltd., HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.

What's This?

A magnificent Grand Piano, a Ten Pound Note, a hundred Pearson's Stereoscopes, and Gold-plated Pencil Cases offered for finding out in what advertisement this appears.

SEE THIS WEEK'S

"Pearson's Weekly."

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A REGULAR CORKER

PEARSON'S WONDERFUL TALKING PUZZLE

IT'S HARD TO HOLD A GOOD THING DOWN.

WE CAN'T STOP THE RUSH.

HAVE YOU GOT ONE?

£100 in PRIZES.

EVERYONE HAS AN EQUAL CHANCE.

GET ONE TO-DAY.

SOLD AT ALL BOOKSTALLS AND NEWSAGENTS.

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ONE SHILLING.

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Mark your envelope "TALKING PUZZLE," and address it to

C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON.

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The Brain Gymnasium.

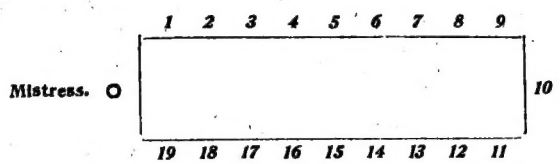
THE competitions in our Christmas number have met with such a hearty welcome from my readers, that I have decided to inaugurate on this page, under the title, "The Brain Gymnasium," a series of puzzles calculated to occupy the attention of the competitors, with interest and profit to themselves, during the long winter evenings. Many of the tasks set will be comparatively easy of solution, while others will be designed with a view to taxing the abilities of the most proficient in this direction.

In each of the competitions a prize of ten shillings will be awarded to the sender of the first correct solution dealt with, and to the sender of the next five correct ones will be presented, in the case of the odd number competitions, one of our silver pencil cases, and, in the case of the even number competitions, a copy of a popular six-shilling novel.

All solutions must be written on separate postcards, and must reach the Editor, SHORT STORIES, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by Monday, January 15th, 1900. Mark the postcards "Brain Gymnasium, No. 7," "Brain Gymnasium, No. 8," etc., according to the number of the competition of which the solution is sent.

No. 7.

NINETEEN girls and their mistress sat down at a table for refreshment thus:



At the end of the repast it was decided that every seventh person should leave the room, and the last one remaining should discharge the bill. How did the girls arrange so that the mistress was left last in the room?

No. 8.

MY 1 2 3 4 5 is to make an impression; my 4 1 3 5 2 is a hamper; my 4 3 5 2 1 is to provide; and my 5 1 3 4 2 is to repeat.

What am I?

No. 9.

To a certain number, add two-thirds of it three times in such a manner that a word is represented in twelve different ways.

No. 10.

REARRANGE the following vertical lines so that a well-known proverb can be read horizontally:

E D E R O V Y
A I G S S H H
Y D D A E A N
R A V Y N E M
S U H H R I O

No. 11.

FOUR boys, **A, B, C,** and **D,** had a certain number of marbles equally divided. A like number was afterwards given to them in the following proportions: **A** received half, **B** received half of the remainder, **C** got a fifth of what **A** and **B** had, while **D** got a quarter of what **B** and **C** received. After playing, it was found that **A** had won two-fifths of **B's** marbles, half of **C's**, and all of **D's**. **B** possessed the remainder, which were just a third of what **A** had. How many did each have at the commencement?

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Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0	10	0
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Half-page " "	5	0	0
Quarter-page " "	2	10	0
Eighth-page " "	1	5	0
Front page, whole " "	12	10	0
" half	6	5	0

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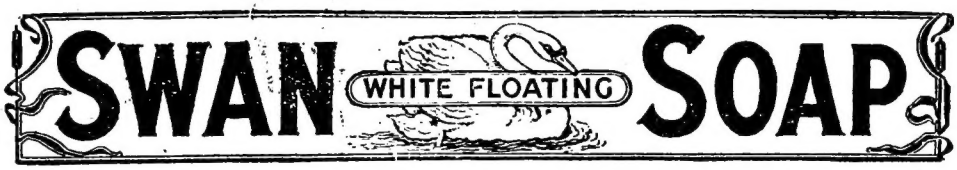
Never Wash Your Face!

with coarse adulterated soap. The secret of a fresh clear complexion consists in using an absolutely pure soap made of the highest-class ingredients.

Never wash dainty fabric with coarse adulterated soap. If you wish to make your expensive fabrics last twice as long, select a soap that is absolutely pure and made of the highest-class ingredients. Of course, if you use



you **may** wash your face, you **may** wash dainty fabric with perfect safety; for SWAN White Floating SOAP is made of the purest and sweetest vegetable oils and fats obtainable, and is specially prepared for washing dainty fabric, for the toilet and the bath.

A Purer Soap is beyond the Art of Soapmaking.

LEVER BROTHERS LIMITED. SOAPMAKERS TO THE QUEEN. PORT SUNLIGHT, CHESHIRE.

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

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SAFE REMEDY CURES

HEADACHE and NEURALGIA

IMMEDIATELY,

And is sold by all leading Chemists in Packets of 18 Doses, 1s.

To ANYONE HAVING THE LEAST DIFFICULTY, it will be sent post free for 12 Stamps by "KAPUTINE Ltd.," Huddersfield; or, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope, A. M. Kaputine, Huddersfield, you will receive a free sample.

The fact that "KAPUTINE" is recommended by many leading Medical Men, and is used in National Hospitals and Infirmaries proves that it is THE, THE recognised SAFE REMEDY FOR HEADACHES.

Refuse Substitutes and demand "KAPUTINE," the Safe Remedy. There is no substitute "LIKE IT"; nothing "AS GOOD"; nothing "SIMILAR."

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

When Buying a Cheap Bicycle,

look at the tyres. If they are not

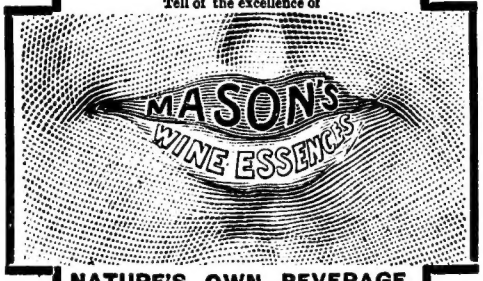
DUNLOP TYRES

the machine is not cheap at any price.

The DUNLOP PNEUMATIC TYRE COMPANY Ltd., Alma Street, Coventry;
160 to 166 Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C.
Branches:—Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Nottingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Dublin, &c.

THOUSANDS OF LIPS

Tell of the excellence of



NATURE'S OWN BEVERAGE.
NON-INTOXICATING.

MASON'S WINE ESSENCES become famous wherever they go. They are pronounced The Ideal by all who try them.

6D. BOTTLE makes **60 GLASSES** of the most Delicious Wine. Exquisite flavour and absolute purity. Suitable for all ages. Sample Bottle, post free, 9 stamps.

MASON'S COFFEE ESSENCE is recognised everywhere as the standard of purity. Have you tried it?

SPECIAL OFFER.
Until December 31st, every purchaser of a Sample Bottle of Wine Essence will be presented with a Sample Bottle of our COFFEE ESSENCE and a MONEY BOX.

NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM,
Makers of MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS
Agents Wanted.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,
Sick Headache, Constipation, Wind and Pains in Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver, and Female Ailments.

SALE OVER SIX MILLION BOXES YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

A Magnificent Complexion Guaranteed

By the free use of LILLIE POWDER. It nourishes, heals, soothes, and brings Health and Beauty.

Prepared from the Original Recipe invented by Mrs. Langtry, under the strict supervision of Her Majesty's Perruquier, Mr. W. Clarkson.

Order it of your Chemist and refuse all substitutes, as they may be injurious.

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